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## LITERARY RETROSPECTION

### RUDUS INDIGESTAQUE.

ROMANCE proved favourable to the cause of gallantry and heroism during the *dark* ages, but we, thank heaven! live in more *enlightened* days: a lover would find occasion to repent of making such rash oaths as the *inamoratos* of ITALY, of SPAIN, and of PORTUGAL, formerly swore to maintain: we are too independent to permit the possibility of it; nor do we so frequently take the law into our own hands.

Besides, how striking is the contrast between the good old romances of our ancestors, and those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries! how wide the difference between "AMADIS OF GAUL" and "THE LIBERTINE," between "PALMERIN OF ENGLAND" and "THE SABLE MASK!" or between the metrical romances of those days and of our own, between "MERLIN" and "THE MINSTRELS OF ACRE," between "THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE" and "THALABA THE DESTROYER."

I purpose, like KING RICHARD, who in sleep beheld the *visions* of those whom he had slain, to take a retrospective view of those "tales of centuries ago" (though written by our contemporaries), which *once existed*; but alas! I cannot boast with RICHARD, that I terminated their existence, nor can I persuade myself that my occupation is "*but a dream*."

The public, in general, knows but little of the ingenuity of booksellers, and the accommodating disposition of authors, to cater for them: however, those who run may read a notable instance of this in the preface to "THE MONK OF UDOLPHO," written by HORSLEY CURTIES. This romance owes its birth to a most whimsical circumstance—but let the author tell his own story.

*"The publisher\* of these pages had long advertised a romance under the appellation of 'THE MONK UDOLPHO,'† nor had its present founder the most distant idea that the fabric was to be of his rearing, till applied to, in consequence of the death of the intended composer, to retrieve him with the public, whom he must otherwise disappoint; and, not without the strongest reluctance did I (he) assent to undertake a task so arduous, and perhaps injurious to the little fame\* I (he) may have acquired by former lucubrations.*

*"It was my (his) earnest wish that the publisher should procure me (him) a sight of the few sheets, or more properly the outline of the story, intended to elucidate the title-page; but I (he) was answered, that the manuscript had been lost, † and that my (his) own resources were equal to the difficulty, &c."*

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\* The notorious J.F. Hughes, who formerly resided in Wigmore-Street. This man was beaten "very soundly" in *his own castle* by Butler Dan---s, for libelling Lady Lanesborough. Many people have doubted which party found revenge the sweetest—the man aggrieved obtained *satisfaction*, and the aggrieved bookseller *two hundred pounds!*

† I beg pardon, gentle Horsley; I am under the disagreeable necessity of contradicting—the romance advertised was to have been called "THE *Bloody* MONK UDOLPHO."

\* "Little *fame*"—how modest, and yet how true!

† Does not the reader consider "The Monk Udolpho" *a taking title*? and does he not think it very possible that "the publisher" had christened that which was yet in the womb of time?

Thus we find that the author has inverted the order of things; he has given a tale to a title, and not a title to a story; he has given

*“to airy nothing  
“A local habitation and a name.”*

Oh! wonderful power of invention!—This reminds me of the *bouts rimés* of the French—with this exception, that it is infinitely more remarkable, singular, and extravagant: a man of tolerable ingenuity might give verses to rhymes, but the genius of a CURTIES alone could have compassed this unheard-of project!

The romances of this gentleman are intolerably dull and tiresome, for he takes more words to tell a story than the most loquacious and circumstantial of talkative old women: he is as finical and particular in narration, as an old bachelor is in his habits and caprices: he is like a puppy that traverses twice as much ground as circumstances require—or perhaps he rather resembles a traveller, who, *losing his way*, takes a circuitous course of three miles, instead of a direct road of one only.

But let me bid a hasty adieu to this narrator of “ANCIENT RECORDS\*”—this *conteur à titres* (as I would to an acquaintance whose company and conversation were irksome and offensive to me), and hail the next “genius of romance.”

Would that, like the monster BRIAREUS, I could strike a hundred blows in the same instant, and that all the vampers of romance, who merit annihilation, were in my presence!—they are the vermin of literature—their spawn creep to our fire-sides, and cover our tables, our chairs, our sofas and our mantle-pieces; we find them in the bed-chambers of our daughters; nay, not unfrequently are they placed beneath their pillows, to occupy their minds at day-break, or to beguile a sleepless night.

But I have to entreat the reader’s pardon for this burst of indignation: I hope, however, that it will not be deemed an unimportant episode.

*Joshua Pickersgill, junior, esq.* hath written a romance, entitled “THE THREE BROTHERS.” I beg leave to quote the author’s opinion of his own work, which appears in the title-page of his romance; it was intended, I imagine, for poetry, but has no legal claim whatever to such distinction, excepting indeed the terminating jingle of the couplets (which, by the way, are not unfrequently discordant). I am half inclined to think that the reader’s opinion may not, perhaps, be so conscientious and liberal as my own, in even supposing it *intended* for poetry. Alluding to his romance, he says it is

“A tale of horror! *which, but to hear it told,*  
“Shall freeze the youngest blood to aged cold;  
“Appal the soul, *like to the author’s,* when  
“He paus’d, and fear’d the daring of his pen.”

Now whether thou art a “gentle reader” or not, I am firmly persuaded thou dost already *fear “the daring of his pen.”* The gentleman presumes to think these lines poetry, for he thrusts them into the title-page of his book as though they were particularly beautiful and aptly illustrative!—they have neither qualities simple nor compound for

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\* The title of one of Mr. Curties’s romances.

poetry; they are neither melodious individually, nor harmonious collectively:—Joshua is certainly one of those unhappy wights described by our immortal dramatic poet, who says that

———“*he who hath not music in his soul,*  
“Is born for treasons, stratagems and spoils.”

Oh Joshua! Joshua! what hast thou brought upon thyself! and we are now to think the worst of thee.—He who feels desirous of reading “THE THREE BROTHERS,” will find how entirely the author’s mind has been busied with “treasons, stratagems and spoils.”

But to speak somewhat seriously. As a romance, this work possesses some interest. Mr. Pickersgill scorns to imitate: he is not one of the “*servum pecus*,” but soars above the many vamps of terrific story: he is a planet, and his contemporaries resemble revolving satellites—like the planets, he is known to every star-gazer—romance reader—but his satellites to a very few. M.G. LEWIS is the moon that rules the present *night of romance reading*: but as the moon and planets are eclipsed by the blaze of day, so are the works of these nocturnals unnoticed by enlightened readers.

Were it not for Mr. Pickersgill’s affectation, innovation, and unpardonable intrusion of deformed couplets, I should now take my *congé* of him; but these transgressions are too glaring and palpable, and merit exposure—censure they need not—their exposure is the severest censure that I can pass on them.

*From a thing called “LOVE’S EMPIRE.”\**

“Ha! now I ken his *hitherward wing*,  
“Scent shedding, music murmuring,  
“Love’s *emperor whom time doth flee*,  
“Chief lord thro’ air, on earth, in sea,  
“O’er dyes and shapes of human face,  
“*And species of bestial race!*

\* \* \* \* \*

“Charms so various to inform  
“A mind *sublim’d ’bove shrewish storm*;  
“Generous wit, *self-fueled fire*,  
“*That distant glads, but scorches nigher.*

\* \* \* \* \*

“From this they see his *caprice change*,  
“Thro’ labyrinthian dance they range,  
“With *godly swim* or fairy pace  
“Maintain the errant note in chace,  
“Till, that outsped, the *springhtly feet*  
“*Sport i’ th’ air, and kissing meet.*”

Perhaps *kicking meet* would make the above one ray less obscure.

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\* Vide “THE THREE BROTHERS,” vol. 3, page 59.

“When heroes brave their horned foe,  
 “*To the fierce circus what frequency go,*  
 “To tourneys of chivalric war,  
 “To carnival and regatta!!”

But perhaps the reader thinks I am hoaxing him with these extracts, and that they are not the produce of our very enlightened century: now, as I am a plain matter-of-fact mortal, and as I can prove what I assert by demonstration, I shall consider myself much indebted to him if he will turn to pages 59, 60, 61, 62 and 63 of the before-mentioned romance, where he may, *if he pleases*, peruse that which nearly resembles the state of English poetry in its *infancy*—with this exception, that I think our verse was never so dreadfully afflicted with *the rickets*,\* as this *inimitable* poem.

But, to make the reader acquainted with this gentleman’s “affectation,” let me submit the following quotations:

“I arose from the bank superior to the tyranny of nature, and *engaging her arm within mine*, returned to the cottage.”

The expression “truth to say” frequently occurs.—“A few steps *promoted* us through the vestibule.”—“Yet so strong was my animosity against the ungrateful fair, that I trembled to behold them, and *conceited* the holy ground to be profaned by their presence.”

“From that morning,” said the Italian, *his sobs quarrelling with his words*, “from that fatal morning *unlighted* sorrow hath oppressed me.”

“The huge misshapen fragments that choked this entrance, were slippery with moss, and splintered so pointedly by the forcible manner in which they had been broke from the mother-stone, that a fall (alluding to the perilous situation of one Claudio) “might have occasioned an *imperfect empalement*.”—Oh horrible! ‘Tis said that the sublime sometimes borders on the ludicrous—This terrific situation was unquestionably intended to convey a sublime picture to the mind, but how powerful must the ludicrous be, when we feel inclined to laugh at a man in so perilous a state!

One more quotation, gentle, patient, indulgent reader, and I will introduce you to Joshua’s “innovations.”

“For the Conte was standing with one hand pressed against his forehead with a savage force, which betrayed his secret wish *to benumb the ability of his brain*.”

But I have discovered another illustration of the *ludicrous sublime*, and cannot for the soul of me keep it to myself.

“The night, which *hung heavily* upon the *face* of nature, *shuffled with tardiness and pain over the head* of Claudio\*.”

’Tis said that no idea should be committed to paper which the pencil cannot picture—I defy even Fuseli the extravaganza to *canvass* this very original thought!

I will now notice a few of the numerous “innovations” of Mr. Pickersgill, jun.

\* *The rickets*—“The rickets is a distemper in children, from an unequal distribution of nourishment, whereby the joints grow knotty, and the limbs uneven.—QUINCY.

\* I presume, from the meaning which the above sentence appears to convey (if it has any meaning at all), that Mr. Pickersgill purposed the personification of “night,” “tardiness,” and “pain,” which are here represented *shuffling together* over the head of Claudio!

“I was yet unable to *subsist her*.”

“Claudio *retrograded* a few paces.”

“Thus mistaking the fervid seat of his heart, *he was rushed forward*, riotous in hope, &c.”

“Nor until their vocabulary of maledictions was nearly run through, did they quit the cavalier, whom they left environed with massy bars, infrangible to the *desperate utmost* of human force.”

“Terror was the system of Julian, and so fully was the Marquis possessed by it, that he offered to him an adoration such as the Indians intend when they *knee the devil*.”

I have only to lay before the reader a note, which will be found at page 177, vol. 2, of this original romance; the allusion of the former part of it is in no way material; it is to the concluding sentence only that I would direct the reader’s attention.

“The audacious attempt of John Lewis Fiesco to destroy the Dorias and subvert the Genoese Republic, happened in the year 1447, nearly three years after the famous battle of Corisoles; a few months after which this romance is supposed to begin. As this alliance of two events, actually so distant, can only be detected by one somewhat of a chronologist, I perhaps should do better not to mention it: but, in case one so qualified should peruse this work, I feel it satisfactory to prevent his depreciating me as less knowing than I am. *Indeed, I wish it were the only wilful fault in these volumes*.”

Thus we may fairly presume that the romantic Joshua has been indulging his itch for irregular verse, his “affection,” and his “innovation,” *knowing* them to be what they are!

Those who read many romances are, I imagine, insensible to the inconsistencies which I am always unfortunate enough to detect, even in works written by men of talents and genius; and thus I am deprived of that interest in the perusal of them, which others enjoy in an intense degree. Sometimes I notice incongruities that the most accommodating and indulgent critic would be at a loss to reconcile: sometimes I read a picturesque description that turns nature into a second state of chaos; and sometimes I meet with an author who does all he can to make the human shape *more than divine*. Thus is the spell dissolved, nor can it be wondered at if I throw the book from me in disgust.

A romance, entitled “FATAL REVENGE, OR THE FAMILY OF MONTORIO,\*” has excited very general interest; the narrative is indeed of the most extravagant and romantic kind; it is told in bold and animated language: the author’s mind in every part of this “tale of terror” appears to have been wound up to a state of ardor and enthusiasm that I have rarely met with. Yet even in this work, which is evidently written by a man of education and very superior abilities, I detected frequent inconsistencies, one of which I will explain.

The mind of Annibal di Montorio, a weak and superstitious young nobleman, is represented to be in that state of fearful anxiety, which Collins has pictured in so masterly a manner in his personification of fear, who is said to start

“Even at the sound himself had made.”

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\* The author of this work is, I understand, a clergyman, whose age, at the time it was written, did not exceed three-and-twenty.

This youth is alone, and at midnight in a turret of Montorio-castle, agitated with superstitious terrors: every thing is represented to be *so still and silent*, that he fears to hear even *his own respiration*; yet, immediately afterwards, he opens the casement to listen to the *tempest raging without!*

FRANCIS LATHOM has favoured *the world* with alternately a novel and a romance for, I believe, the last twenty years; and, from the surprising rapidity with which these fictions have been wrought up, I conceive that this slave to literature lives only upon the produce of his brain. These productions *tell sad tales* of this gentleman's abilities: they nourish and support him, no doubt, but they are sickly and wearisome to other people. Yet I must remember that this genius writes for his bread, and that the number of his loaves are multiplied by the number of volumes that he manufactures. Then let me intreat you, gentle, benevolent, and christian reader, to peruse in pity the romances of Francis Lathom, for he no doubt "prays," and I will bear witness that he "works" manfully for "his daily bread."

If six months pass without my seeing in the daily papers a new work advertised, from the pen of FRANCIS LATHOM, author of *The Mystery, Astonishment! Men and Manners,* &c. &c. &c. I shall verily conclude that he has not consumed with prudence, and in a direct and unvarying proportion, the produce of his latest production; and that his appetite, like that of most dullards, has been infinitely more keen than his wit.

The style of very few modern romances suggests a favourable opinion of the writer's genius: almost every *auteur romanesque* makes use of the same ingredients in the composition of his work: "*Crimine ab uno disce omnes.*" Some of these legends are compounded of violent and irritable drugs, which occasion transports of an alarming nature; and I know a youth who was affected to that violent degree, by perusing one of them, that he threw the offensive volume into the fire, and his pocket had in consequence to atone for the irritable state of his nerves. But by far the greater part of these "tales of times past," are known to partake most potently of a soporific ingredient called *sentimental passion*: this I aver I have frequently found irresistible: an author who has no very tender regard for his reputation, may with safety, make use of this *drug*, for it disarms criticism by wrapping the passive and unconscious mind in the elysium of a sound nap.

The author of "THE MONK" has declined in the public estimation, every since the publication of that which gave him celebrity: a new work from the pen of Mr. Lewis invariably excites a powerful interest in the mind of every one: we remember the sensations with which we perused this very interesting romance, and fondly hope to partake a second time of those terrific incidents which chilled us with their magic influence. But alas! this never more will happen. Mr. Lewis wrote this celebrated tale at an age, when the mind is most susceptible of romantic impressions:—he was then a minor, and on his travels through scenes the most wild, picturesque, and terrific. The bent of his genius had been, no doubt, considerably indulged, by purusing the tales of chivalry, of superstition, and of faery of our own country; but I do not imagine that he had at this time particularly attached himself to the study of German literature. This was the rock on which he split; for almost every subsequent work has been taken, either directly or indirectly, *from the German*. How chilled by the dull task of translation has that genius become, which once gave birth to the finest pictures of romance!

But, in my admiration of this gentleman's real genius, I had nearly omitted to notice the animadversions of the author of "THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE" on "THE MONK."

This gentleman censures Mr. Lewis's Romance with the utmost severity: he says, that the author has "*thrust upon the nation the most open, and unqualified blasphemy, against the very code and volume of our religion.*" This is very strong language, nor do I think the author is justified in using it.

Because Mr. Lewis has dared to publish an opinion, which, I am persuaded, thousands of christians have entertained before him, he has experienced this writer's most virulent censure; who, not content with the most "unqualified" severity in his own person, wishes that the law should deal with him as harshly and illiberally as himself.

But let us quote the very passage which has given this man the greatest offence.

"That *prudent* mother (Elvira), while she admired *the beauties* of THE SACRED WRITINGS, was convinced, that, *unrestricted, no reading more improper could be permitted a young woman.* Many of the narratives *can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast;* every thing is called roundly and plainly by its own name, and *the annals of a brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions.* Yet this is the book, which young women are recommended to study, which is put into the hands of children, able to comprehend little more than those passages of *which they had better remain ignorant, and which but too frequently inculcate the first rudiments of vice, and give the first alarm to the still sleeping passions.* Of this, Elvira was so fully convinced, that she would have *preferred* putting into her daughter's hands Amadis of Gaul, or the valiant champion Tirante the White; and *would sooner have authorised her studying the lewd exploits*\* of Don Galaor, or *the lascivious jokes* of the Damzel Plazer de mi vida."—I have marked certain passages in italics, as the author of "THE PURSUITS OF LITERATURE" has done so, and in order that the reader may make himself thoroughly acquainted with the real meaning of them—at all events, that meaning which the author considers most censurable.

What I have already asserted, that there are many of a similar opinion with Mr. Lewis, concerning certain narratives and passages in the Sacred Writings, I have only to prove, by mentioning some of those selected works, introductory to the Scriptures, written purposely for young people, many of which have been selected by women of exemplary character, and of acknowledged abilities, among whom Mrs. Trimmer shines conspicuous. I can also mention several men, who appear to have considered works of this kind of the first importance;—Dr. Hunter, the compiler of "SACRED BIOGRAPHY;" the Reverend Mark Anthony Meilan, author of "HOLY WRIT FAMILIARIZED TO JUVENILE CONCEPTIONS;" and Burder, who edited "THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE."

I cordially unite with the author of "THE PURSUITS" in one respect—the obscenity of "THE MONK" cannot be censured with too much severity; and I wish that the "Attorney-General would set forth the several obscene passages, and conclude that they are an offence against the King's peace."\*

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\* And with reason—since fictitious indelicacy is not likely to make so lasting an impression as that which is authentic, especially in the Sacred Volume of our religion.

\* Vide Pursuits of Literature, Notes to Part 4.



Of ROSA MATILDA I have but few words to say. How the absurd trash of this fair “libertine” has obtained so much notice, I cannot divine. How absurd, how ludicrous, how contemptible are sentiments of morality and religion from the pen of such a weak enthusiast!—But I have not patience to remain a minute longer in her company, and I am sure the reader will gladly bid adieu to this “*chartered LIBERTINE.*”\*

A celebrated French Historical Romance Writer of our own day is very anxious, on all occasions, that the reader should *not do what she herself has done, that is, confound historical with fictitious incidents*. To effect this, she particularises that which she takes from authentic sources, thus—“*Historique.*” Does she imagine for one moment, that, after closing the book, the reader can separate those incidents that are historical, from those which are invented?—then why trouble herself to point out what is historical and what fictitious?—but is it not rather probable that the reader will retain a recollection of that, which is the most interesting and romantic (and it usually happens that such incidents are of imagination), and, connecting such events with historical characters, imagine that to be historical which is invented, and forget entirely that which is true?

I was not, therefore, surprised at the exclamation of a French critic, who, on taking up one of Madame Genlis’s latest historical Romances, said—“*Encore un Roman Historique!*”

I imagine that, presuming upon a name (and Madame Genlis’s name is a passport through the hands of many), she has committed herself to *selection* rather than *invention*.<sup>\*</sup> An historical subject is always within her reach, nor has she occasion “to fancy, contrast, and combine” characters, for they also are ready and fit for use: she has only to foist in a few incidents (the less probable the better), put sentiments and words into the hearts and mouths of people who never felt or uttered them, and then she has conjured up (not with the wand of a genius, but with the tool of a literary mechanic) an historical romance!

\* Is it not amazing that the most licentious writers of romance are two women?—“IDA OF ATHENS” has raised a blush on the cheek of many. The effects of indelicacy are more dangerous than those of romance; and we may therefore call SYDNEY OWENSON and ROSA MATILDA *the Scylla and Charybdis of Romance.*

\*\* Apropos—This reminds me of the metrical romance writer, WALTER SCOTT, who has recently taken upon himself the dull, but rapid means of *adding to the weight* of his purse,—that of Editorship. To be an Editor, a man must possess judgment and patience. If he has genius, he becomes, in my opinion, superior to the dull business of comparing and arranging; and indeed I do not think a man of genius can fetter his mind to it. It is for this reason alone I suspect that the good Walter has employed agents\* in the execution of “THE WORKS OF DRYDEN, COMPLETE, EDITED BY WALTER SCOTT;” and I really look upon him as a literary tyrant, who employs unworthy agents in the execution of his ambitious and interested designs. The good Walter’s reputation was at “blood heat,” previous to the publication of this work; but it fell, and rapidly too, to “*temperate,*” shortly after its appearance. It is indeed but a very *mediocre* performance.

The conduct of this literati reminds me of the arts which SERTORIUS made use of to gull the Barbarians. It may be remembered with how small a force he resisted, and sometimes repulsed, the legions of Rome: but, however fortunate, and however great, however devoted the Barbarians might be to him, he found it necessary to avail himself of their ignorance and superstition, in the prosecution of his designs. His agent, for this purpose, was a beautiful white hind, which he informed them was sent by the Gods. The delight I have felt on reading “THE LAY OF THE MINSTREL,” and “MARMION,” has made me fully sensible of the transcendent powers of Scott’s genius: why has he made use of the magic of a name, but to delude us? Does he imagine that his name alone can attach importance to a book, and, like the touch of Midas, that it can make every thing gold to which it is attached? Some people may be blinded by their prejudices in his favour, but he will do well to remember that we are not all, like the devotees to SERTORIUS’S hind, *ignorant Barbarians.*

The *modern system* of book-making ought to be put down; it mars genius that is tempted to engage in it, disgusts men of taste, and puts bread into the mouths of those who have no brains. Historical romances are manufactured weekly—French novels\* and tales of romance translated and published as originals—and old novels republished†, without being acknowledged as such.

Heaven knows! we have more authors now than ever: if a father writes, the son is straightway attacked with the *cacoethes scribendi*, and thinks to become—a greater man than his father!—As for the female part of the community, I verily believe that every third woman in these happy united kingdoms, considers herself a genius—nay, I have heard, and readily believe it, that there are many thick-headed female dames of fortune who sacrifice hundreds to establish—the reign of dullness and of folly!

The title-page of this work informs the public that they are to expect a *Satirical Novel*! And, in spite of the London satirists' invectives, in spite of the *fanatic* vilifyings of the *soi-disant* (*ephemeral*) satirist of Bristol, the following volumes are avowed to be written by THE AUTHOR OF "THE PRIVATE HISTORY OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND!"

Various conjectures having arisen as to the writer of that work, the Author, who has reasons for yet concealing her name, will affix the REAL initials of that name to this advertisement.

Her merits, as a writer, are but small; the mercy, the forbearance of a BRITISH PUBLIC, ample; to such she looks up for support and protection: and she thanks the *Satirist*, who, while he pointed out her errors with *severity*, yet declared that the person who penned *one certain* chapter in the PRIVATE HISTORY OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND, "*had talents for writing a work that might defy criticism!*"

In one part of this novel, which is now offered to the world, to shew *the effects of romance-reading* on the weak and ductile mind of youth, the Author has, while endeavouring to keep morality strictly in view, interspersed the pages with a few authentic allusions. Our modern writers of romance blend HISTORY and *fiction*: in that, she has shewn herself an imitator; and, particularly in her notes, she has copied from that renowned French authoress and times-serving lady, the female *reformist* of the education of *Princes*, the advocate of *French liberty*, and now the flexible attendant on the *despotic* Court of NAPOLEAN! Like that celebrated lady, all authentic facts she has marked in the margin, "*Historique.*"

It is an adventurous task to oppose satire to satire: before *true* criticism, tempered with that politeness and gentleness due to her sex, the Author humbly bends; the pseudo critics she defies and laughs at.

While she utterly detests all *prudish hypocrisy* and grimace, she truly venerates virtue and morality; and trusts her writings will ever be found replete with such precepts, as

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\* *Vide* "DANGERS THROUGH LIFE," published by Mrs. Plunkett, *as original*. This novel is a translation of "LES MALHEURS LE L'INCONSTANCE."

† On reading "Part the Second" of "The Morlands," I was inexpressibly surprised to discover that the respectable Mr. Dallas had been guilty of a most violent act of plagiarism, in actually republishing, sometimes verbatim, an old novel, entitled "He would be a PEER."

youth may peruse without danger, and such diversity of ideas as may amuse the leisure-hours of the experienced.

S.G.\*\*\*,

THE AUTHOR.

*Westminster.*

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ROMANCE READERS

AND

ROMANCE WRITERS.

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ROMANCE READERS

AND

ROMANCE WRITERS:

A Satirical Novel.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
'A PRIVATE HISTORY OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND, &C.'

GNATHO. *Quid agitur?*

PARMENO. *Statur.*

GANTHO. *Video.*

*Numquid nam hic, quod nolis, vides?*

PARMENO. *Te.*

GNATHO. *Crede.*

TERENCE.

M.G. LEWIS, ROSA MATILDA, HORSLEY

CURTIES, &c. *parlent.*

*Hélas, mon Dieu, craignez tout d'un auteur en courroux,*

*Qui peut——* BOILEAU.

VOL I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. HOOKHAM, JUNIOR, AND E.T. HOOKHAM,  
15, OLD BOND STREET.

1810.

THE EFFECTS  
OF  
ROMANCE READING.

CHAP. I

THREE BROTHERS.

RALPH.

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find),  
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;  
No pow'rs of body or of soul to share,  
But what his nature and his state can bear.

POPE.

CHARLES.

Sincere, plain-hearted, hospitable, kind;  
Yet, like the must'ring thunder when provok'd.

THOMSON.

EDWARD.

Slave to no sect, he takes no private road,  
But looks through nature, up to nature's God.

POPE.

"IT is very strange," said uncle Ralph, with evident impatience and vexation, as he threw down on the table with great force a romance of the last century, "that a writer must use so many words, only to tell us, that *a woman got up and sat down again!* No, they must inform us in high-flown, poetic language, that she rose from her mossy couch, and then thoughtfully reseated herself, and resumed her pensive posture! and then, if the wind happened to blow her thin clothes about, and made her ribbons flutter and fly, we must be entertained through half a page with her *silken scarf floating in the wind* and the rude zephyr discomposing her light and nymph-like attire!"

Uncle Charles, who had been studying the last orders of General Wolfe, and who had just brushed away a tear from off his veteran cheek, which the last exhortation of that renowned hero to his soldiers had drawn from his eye, shut the orderly-book, and smiled, 'midst his tears, at the ideas of his brother Ralph; while Edward, busy in reading a newspaper, laid it down and assented to Ralph's opinion by a half-stifled smile, and the word—*humph!* uttered so inwardly, that it sounded not much unlike the grunting of a pig!

But, in order to preserve some method, it is necessary to introduce this trio to our readers, and describe the sort of character which each of them (all originals in their kind) was possessed of.

The eldest brother, Mr. Ralph Marsham, was left in possession of a small paternal estate, comfortable, because clear and unincumbered; but income-tax, property-tax, and land-tax, had rendered him less rich than in the days of his youth: and a most valuable farm being attached to his estate, he resolved to superintend it himself, and indeed to work on it with the same indefatigable toil which his labourers bestowed upon it, in order to ensure to themselves the excellent and plentiful cheer, together with the ample wages which Mr. Marsham allowed them.

Gentlemen-farmers are but sorry tillers of land; and the master's watchful eyes, and even his assistance united, will not avail much, if he is not a thorough judge of that profession which is universally allowed to be the most happy and independent of any in the world.

But Ralph derived one advantage by his perseverance; he made labour easy and habitual to him, by boldly inuring himself to it; and continual and heavy losses, blights in his corn, diseases in his cattle, and the frauds of his serving-men, soon reduced him to that state which rendered exertion on his own part, and unwearied employment about his farm, an indispensable obligation.

He was endowed with a solidity of understanding, good, honest principles, but was rather a kind of every-day character; and was chiefly guided both in the pursuits of his studies, and all his most important actions, by mere matter of fact.

Charles, the second brother, had been bred to the profession of arms, and was, at the commencement of this history, a lieutenant on half-pay.

An early introduction into the world's grand theatre had given, to a prepossessing person, an ease of manners, and a certain address, which marked the gentleman in every movement, and which the society of the army alone is capable of imparting to the well-born officer: the heart of Charles was warm, and might with truth be said, to be seated in its right place—but his head approached to that temperature which is generally known by the appellation of *hot*; which heat often led him astray: his temper and his expressions were both hasty, and in the latter he thought no epithet too energetic to evince his indignation against the person who had offended him: but the principles of revenge and resentment only played upon his *lip*, they never entered his generous and excellent *heart*!

Like his brother Ralph, he affected to despise all romantic enthusiasm: but this in Charles was affectation only; a tale of woe, either real or fictitious, always surcharged his heart, and caused the tender overflow to glisten in his eye.

Edward, the youngest, had just attained his forty-second year; he was bred to the church, and *enjoyed* a curacy of *fifty pounds per annum*! He had been for some years a widower, and was the father of two daughters, the surviving children of five, by an unportioned, amiable, and by him, ever-lamented wife.

As he had a right honourable young rector, who hated the church most cordially, except by those emoluments it brought him, through a considerable living; and who rapaciously seized on every perquisite that his poor curate in the country might have enjoyed, under one more kind and beneficent; Edward, except for the bounty of honest Ralph, would have found great difficulty in bringing up and educating his two daughters on so scanty a pittance as he received for his labours in the ecclesiastical vineyard.

To those who were not acquainted with Edward's real character, there appeared a moroseness about him, which was repellant in the extreme: his manners were cynical, and

his sentences in general short and severe: having in his infancy received a most severe castigation, through the perfidy and duplicity of a schoolfellow, whom the generosity of his heart forbade him to betray, he had taken such an abhorrence to the vice of lying, that he thought no punishment too severe for the offence; and no outward terms that language can bestow, strong enough to express his indignation at so despicable a vice. "I can arm myself," he would say, "against a murderer, I can bar my doors against a robber; but can I guard against the wretch who wounds me in secret with his tongue, or steals from me my friends, by attacking my reputation?"

How much is a man of this candid principle to be pitied, and what dreadful mortifications attend the votary of truth, who is a most profound politician! Such was Edward Marsham, who was seldom seen without a newspaper in his hand; and oh! what an inundation of falsehoods has a newsmonger daily to encounter!

The elder Mr. Marsham had always remained a bachelor, and had now given up all prospects of matrimony. One reason, he urged, was, that having always been bred a gentleman, he could not think of taking as a partner for life an uneducated woman, who could be nothing but the plain country housewife; who, after the occupations of the day were over, could entertain him with nothing but the settings of his geese, how many eggs had been put under the black hen, when the brindled cow would calve; or that next week would be the *great wash*, and then he must not invite the friends he had promised himself; "While she sits," added he, "burning off the end of her cotton, before it goes through her needle, by one solitary candle, to save expence, while she is darning her own or her children's stockings!—else I must be tied for life to one of these modern ladies with a finished education; and how finished? by the *figurante*, the drill-serjeant, and the black-eyed cymbal-player\*! It is true, my gay wife might perform well on the harp and the tambourine; but then, either as the Grecian or the Egyptian habit might prevail, I should see her, in common with every one else, half naked, or laced up in a pair of long stays, the complete figure of an Egyptian mummy: she could never find her keys or her purse, because she wears no pockets; and as she was *shopping* perhaps some whole morning without purchasing any thing, her *ridicule* has been left on some counter or other, but where she knows not, containing, may be, twenty or thirty pounds' worth of cash: then if I should be blessed with children, she has them christened by names I can scarce pronounce; and puts a bar to all comfort of her society and conversation, by continually poring over a set of idle novels and romances: While the woman of real sense and amiability, possessed of sweetness and cheerfulness of manners, united to a well-cultivated mind, I am sure will never wed a man like me; and thus, as I have lived, I will die a bachelor."

Such was the reasoning and determination of Ralph, on his state of celibacy; and on the death of his sister-in-law, he resolved on making his nieces Margaret and Mary his

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\*The education of a fashionable female is by no means complete, unless finished by the above trio. An *Italian figurante* is hired at an immense price, to teach those dances adapted only to the Opera, and which no gentlewoman can ever exhibit in public. The drill-serjeant teaches them to walk well—and this is not the worst part of female education, for dancing-masters always walk ill. But the natural graces of an elegant young female, we think, render unnecessary the voluptuous attitudes taught by the swarthy sons of Asia, in the performance on the tambourine and cymbals.



heirs; his property, when divided between them, would not be great, and he bestowed on them a plain and useful education.

When Edward and Charles became widowers, they united their small property to that of their brother Ralph; and they, with the two nieces of Mr. Marsham, composed the family at the spacious farmhouse.

“I am not fond of fictitious histories of any kind,” said Ralph, continuing his observations on romances, as he leaned his elbow on the dirty, much-used, marble-papered cover of the volume he had just thrown down, and which his niece Margaret had been attentively perusing with very different emotions to those of her uncle. “These works deal so much in the marvellous; in events utterly impossible ever to have taken place.”—“I recollect once,” said Charles, “being confined one day at an inn, when I was travelling, by an heavy fall of snow, and expecting, when I asked for a book, I should have that collection given me which is reckoned amongst “The Miseries of Human Life,” my landlady brought me up a modern romance; and there I read of a young lady who had been some years confined in a dungeon, without *light*, and great part of the time without *food!* yet when she came out, her delicate form and astonishing beauty captivated all who beheld her, and in particular one of her deliverers, who afterwards married her.”—“And yet, I am sure,” said Ralph, “she must, from famine and confinement, have grown as ugly and as sallow as a witch; and from the damps and chills of her dungeon, as they express themselves, her pretty limbs must have been either useless, or grown confounded clumsy, from being swelled with the rheumatism!”

“Ay! ay!” said Charles, “I am sure her person must have received considerable damage, for I well remember that my friend Colonel George Aylesbury, before he was confined for debt in the apartment of the King’s Bench, was as good-looking a soldier as ever I saw in my life; and now he appears older, by ten years, than he really is, and looks more like a *black-diamond* merchant than an officer.\*”

“I wish, brother Charles,” said Edward, “you would not make use of so much *slang* in your conversation, but call things by their right names: pray, is not the word *coals* as easy to pronounce as *black diamonds?*”

“Certainly,” said Charles, “but you interrupted my remarks on the effect of confinement on the person: *you* are fond, my reverend brother, of theatrical amusements; well! was not the once beautiful Mrs. W. quite spoiled from every appearance of elegance? could she ever again reassume on the stage the masculine habit, in which she once looked so well? Her face, it is true, was so lovely, that it required the rudest hand of adversity to disfigure it; but her fine form (though she was always inclined to the *embonpoint*) was totally destroyed; and, had it not been for the *generous Turk* who extricated her, the confined walls of the King’s Bench would have in time given to her such a rotundity, that she could never have appeared on the theatre again.\*”

“Ah! now you have ascended from the *slang* to the novel style,” said Edward, “with *your rude hand of adversity*; but I maintain, that the greatest part of novels ought to be burned by the common hangman; though there are, no doubt, some of those works of fiction, which are both moral and entertaining.”

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

“What,” cried the two elder brothers, at the same time, “do *you*, Edward, defend any thing *fictitious*?”—“Assuredly,” replied Edward, “otherwise, I must condemn the excellent fables of Æsop, *Les milles et une nuits*, and many of the works of the ancients: but here,” continued he, while he clenched his teeth and crumpled up the newspaper in his hand, “here is the vehicle of the most daring and most abominable lies that ever human art and malice can invent.”

“Reflect, Edward,” said Charles, “that the editors of these papers pledge themselves to fill this paper daily, for the amusement, as well as the information of their subscribers. A man sees, each day, before him this sheet, which he knows must be filled; and if there is a dearth of home news, and foreign mails are late in their arrival, he must either *conjecture or invent*, to please the public.”

“No,” said Edward, “let him leave the places blank; let the paper appear pure as it is, till stained by man; nor sully his columns by falsehoods, which only serve to encourage the growth of rebellion, or delude the stanch loyalist into a belief of victories obtained, which the same paper will next day contradict; and thus the stings of disappointed hope inflict a double pang to the mind, that had before exulted in the success of his country’s arms, or those of her allies.”

The fascination of habit is not easily done away; and the arrival of the post-boy, with letters and the important newspaper, gave a truce to all other thoughts and conversation, than what the private correspondence of friendship, the bulletins of Buonaparte, the conjectures of home *quidnuncs*, together with all the various subterfuges of the press, gave rise to.

When Ralph and Charles had perused *their* letters, and Edward his few lines from his right honorable and reverend rector, the two former amused themselves in watching the versatile turns of the politician’s anxious countenance.

It exhibited various emotions, but very few of the pleasurable kind: at length, he laid down the paper; and smoothing the journal of the former day, which, in a rage, he had before crumpled up, “Now,” said he, “I am resolved to *keep* all these contradictory sheets of heterogeneous matter; which one day tell me that the French have beaten the Austrians, and the day following, that the Austrians have beaten the French; that Sir Arthur Wellesley is surrounded; or that the whole army of Soultz is taken: one day the Spaniards have taken Corunna; the next they are defeated; the next speaks ill of the Junta: again they are all we can wish, the Spaniards beat the French, drive them out of their country, and carry all before them. And now for home news: some little time ago I read that the Lady Harriet Egmont, after going off with a married man, the father of eight children, and living with him in open adultery, was restored to her home, and her too indulgent and much injured husband: whereas, to my certain knowledge, she remained a short time at an isolated mansion belonging to her brother, and then actually went off with her infatuated lover to an island which has the peculiar privilege of harbouring crim. con. associates, insolvent debtors, and all the other *et-ceteras*, intitled—*indiscretions!*”

“My heart bleeds,” said Charles, “at the domestic misfortunes of the good old Earl, Lord Gresham’s father! one of his sons so lately in the same awkward predicament, and his gallant son, Montague, deprived, by the chance of war, of a limb: and then, Lord Gresham was a character once so highly admired, that it is a thousand pities he should

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\**Historique.*

tarnish all his noble qualities by the fascinations of such a woman! who, I am told, has neither manners nor person to recommend her.\*”

“And yet, I doubt not,” said Ralph, “but that this affair will furnish a foundation for the story of some *free*-minded novel-writer, or, as the new school calls it, *liberal*-minded! and we shall have it some day brought forward, so clouded with romantic incidents, that no one will guess who it means; and have for its title, perhaps, “THE FATAL ATTACHMENT, OR LOVE TRIUMPHANT OVER DUTY!” wherein we shall find Lady Harriet’s face, and even her *form*, extolled to the skies; or perhaps some bookseller’s voluptuous hireling will be daring enough, for a few guineas, to write a pamphlet in defence of the conduct of Lady Harriet Egmont!”

“No one *can* defend their conduct in the smallest degree,” said Edward; “the generous conduct of Lord Gresham, in refusing to fight the brother, shews, however, that virtue is not totally extinct in his once truly noble nature; for, I believe, no one ever doubted his courage!”

“You are a man of peace, brother,” said Charles, “your profession enjoins you to teach what your GREAT MASTER, when he came into the world, proclaimed to all mankind; but I know, if a man had challenged *me*, I should have acted very differently.”

After again taking up the newspaper, and laying it down again, “Now, here,” said Edward, “is another lying business! two days ago there was a current report, that the republican reformist, the old crony and defender of Colonel Despard, had been killed in a duel! and here, this day, I find it asserted to have been a mere fabrication.”

“Come, come,” said Ralph, “a truce to novels, newspapers, and fables of every kind: here,” continued he, “I will set an example;” and at the same time he threw the volume, whose enthusiastic expressions had so much displeased him, into the fire.

This caused an hearty laugh from Charles, and the risible muscles of the cynical Edward relaxed a little on the occasion.

Ralph did not appear a *merry* man, but there was a certain humour in his actions, and sometimes in his expressions, which diverted only, when performed or spoken by himself; it was requisite to know the man personally, to be at all moved by them; in another they would have been flat, nor could the record of them afford amusement.

Charles, like the famous Will Honeycomb, “laughed easily,” and had much shrewdness and quickness about him: Edward smiled seldom, but was possessed of solid sense, untainted religion, virtue, and honesty: and though Ralph was the blunt farmer, Charles tutored but little, except in the field of valour, and Edward often apparently the snarling philosopher, yet they all inherited those unshaken principles of the mind and heart, on which sure basis is built the character of the true gentleman.

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\* *Historique.*

## CHAP. II.

## THE NIECES.

## MARY.

Her form was fresher than the morning rose,  
 When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd, and pure  
 As is the lily or the mountain snow.

THOMSON.

## MARGARET.

Each nerve was fever'd, and convuls'd her brow;  
 Her unsettled eye  
 Wander'd high, then low,  
 Alternately,  
 As if the pow'r of thought had fled.

*Love and Madness.*

WHILE the three brothers were viewing the blazing novel, Margaret, the youngest Miss Marsham, entered the parlour, and looking first at the table where she had left her book, and next at the grate, from whence a part of the boarded cover had just fallen, she uttered the exclamation of "O heavens! what sacrilegious hand has destroyed the recreative amusement of my leisure-hours, and *impeded* my *itineration* through the delightful labyrinths of imagination?"—"Don't be such a confounded fool, Peggy," said her uncle Ralph, "I am ashamed to hear you talk such nonsense." "What then," said she, "to add to my earthly miseries, am I to be called Peggy? My name, sir, is Margaritta; and to no other name will I, hereafter, give an answer."

The Reverend Mr. Marsham looked at his daughter with serious concern, and shook his head: "But what," continued Margaret, "my ever *revered*, though too *rigid* parent, am I to do? there are *seven* volumes of that delightful work; and the set is spoiled by the fatal destruction of one; the whole seven must be paid for."

"Ah!" said Edward, looking at his brother, "you should not have been so rash, Ralph; I have no money to throw in the fire."

"Make yourself easy brother," said Ralph, "I have no money neither that I would *wish* to throw in the fire; but paying the expence of those books cannot ruin me, and therefore, as the fault *is*, so let the expence *be* mine."

"But can you, sir," said Margaret, "can you restore to me those extatic moments of fond delusion, which that book imparted to my pensive mind? Alas! can you ——" and with the sentence unfinished, she threw herself back on her chair, and cast up her eyes with that would-be-languid expression which portended a fainting fit; and which she would have undoubtedly performed for the amusement of the spectators, had not the glow which she experienced on her cheek, from anger, and the heat from her late vociferation, made her conscious that such an exhibition would then have been impracticable.

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\**Verbatim* expression of a romantic girl, the daughter of a dignified clergyman.

“What is the matter with my sister?” said the sweet voice of a fresh-looking country girl, who now entered the room, and whose arch eye, glancing towards the fire, soon beheld the cause of Margaret’s violent agitation.

“What I hope, my good girl,” said her uncle Charles, rising up and giving her his chair, at the same time drawing one by her for himself, “what I hope will never be the matter with you: I mean a madness after romances, books which I think your good sense will not suffer you to peruse.” “O yes, I read them sometimes,” replied the lively Mary, “but then I do not make myself like my sister, a slave to them; and since our kind uncle Ralph indulged us with subscribing to the library, I very seldom get a novel I like; for Margaret sends for such incredible, such marvellous kind of works, that I shut the books with disgust, and seldom have patience to read them through: but, indeed my dear girl,” added she, affectionately kissing the cheek of her sister, “your health would be better if you did not sit so closely over your favorite studies, which disturb your dreams, and make you unable some nights to close your eyes: would you, like me, enjoy the fresh morning air, which you lose in broken slumbers, after your restless nights, you would soon have done with such idle fancies, which *you* describe by the title of *nervous affections* and *hypochondriac* malady!”

Edward, whose heart towards his children was often at war with his tongue, said, “Come, come, not quite so much talk: what you say is very just, but you know your sister’s health is *naturally* delicate.” “And what is it that renders it so,” said Ralph, “but the very cause my niece Mary has alleged? I’ll tell you what, Peggy, go up stairs, and see if none of your father’s shirts want a wristband or a button; though I believe Mary takes good care of all our linen; but never mind, if you do not find any thing there to do, I have three old pair of worsted stockings, which I wear under my gaiters when I ride over my grounds on a wet morning, darn them for me, if you please, for I know there are two or three great holes in each pair. Do you hear me, Peggy?” “I am sure,” said she, bursting into tears, “if I am called Peggy again I shall go into a fit!”

The Reverend Mr. Marsham took down his hat from the peg on which it hung, drew the arm of his daughter Margaret through his own, and said, “Come, child, we will take a walk, the air perhaps will revive your spirits.”

She appeared desirous to draw away her hand from her father’s, shuddered as he placed it under his arm, and casting up her eyes towards heaven, exclaimed, “Poor persecuted *dove* that I am!”

As they walked onwards towards the meadows, she perceived a coarse ragged shirt hanging on a hedge; she advanced towards it, looked at it, and gave a deep sigh. “Ay, my child,” said her father, “many are the forlorn children of poverty! how few are blessed with a relative like ours! what would have become of you, my poor girls, without your excellent uncle?” “Oh! that barbarous inhuman man!” said she. “Margaret,” said her father, “you make me seriously angry: what, because he threw your ridiculous book into the fire, you can be capable of bestowing on your benefactor such an epithet!” “O no, sir, his whole conduct excruciates all the tender sentiments of the soul; he is so utterly devoid of heroism, refinement, and all the softer sensations of the mind.” “Stuff—nonsense,” said her father, “quit this ridiculous language, this affectation of hard words, this pedantic jargon, so disgusting in the general conversation of a young female: but we must return

homewards, it begins to rain; come, run on before, make use of the agility that youth has given you, and get home as fast as you can."

Margaret ran, it is true, but not in obedience to the commands of her father; for, almost flying to the ragged shirt, she thus addressed it: "Oh! garment of my beloved; garment that envelopes and embraces the polished and beautiful skin of the fairest of the sons of men: behold! the heavens themselves dissolve in tears at thy unmerited indigence! Oh! when will the much-wished-for day arrive, that thy noble parents will claim thee as their own, and acknowledge thee in the face of an admiring world? when shall thy Margaritta be hailed as thy happy bride, and addressed by the title of *her grace*, as she shares with thee the ducal coronet? Alas! the clouds of fate intervene, and at present obscure our future destiny; one brutal uncle, a rigid father, and a rustic sister, all combine to persecute the wretched Margaritta!"

Edward, who had only *walked* a good pace, now reached his daughter, and thinking that she prest the discoloured linen to her eyes only to dry the effusions of a benevolent and too sensible heart, gave her a tender paternal pressure to his bosom, and put half-a-crown into her hand for the purchase of a new ribbon to her bonnet, to replace that which the rain had much injured.

Mary, the eldest of the Reverend Mr. Marsham's daughters, was called by every one round about and in the village a very pretty girl; yet, take every feature separately, and they would not be called beautiful: the glow of health and sprightly innocence, in a female of nineteen, seldom fails to attract; but Mary had to boast of *more*; a sweetness, mingled with a playful archness, embellished her countenance, and while they rendered its charms indescribable, made them also irresistible: her eyes, in regard to colour, had no claim to beauty, for they were only a dark grey; but they were lively and sparkling, and received additional attraction from a long, dark eye-lash: her nose was neither *Roman* nor *Grecian*; but it was well formed, and no other would have suited her other features so well, perhaps it might be *Egyptian*, as that is the present fashion of the day; though we have not yet heard of any standard for that prominent part of the face, over which the *snaky* ornament of *Isis*, after having twisted its folds amongst the lovely tresses of Britannia's fair, sits formidably nodding and darting its forked tongue, to the dismay of those who would dare approach the medusan ornament.

The mouth of Mary vied in colour with the ripe cherry, and her teeth might come in competition with ivory: her form was not *sylph-like*, but it was tall, upright, and of a plumpness approaching to *embonpoint*: her voice was so melodious, and her ear so perfectly correct, that her uncle Ralph often wished to yield to the temptation of having her taught to perform (not on the *harp*) but on the piano-forte; but as all the brothers judged that it would be only an ornamental part of education, which she would in her present and future sphere of life never have occasion to display, they contented themselves with the delightful warblings of her wild notes, with which she often charmed their hours of rural leisure.

Margaret, or as we shall sometimes have occasion to call her, *Margaritta*, was one year younger than her sister; her stature might rather be called short than tall, and not very well proportioned; for her shoulders were exceeding broad, which defect she always dignified by saying she had the true *cleopatra back*: her countenance had some meaning, and would not have been disagreeable, though far from pretty, had she not distorted and

twisted every feature, in order to give to it that expression which she judged was irresistible: her large dark eyes would have been called good, had she not been continually casting them upwards, in a solemn, rolling kind of appeal to heaven: her forehead was much seamed by the small-pox; the rest of her face had pretty well escaped that rueful malady; and her small rosy mouth resembled that of her sister, only with this difference; Mary looked best when she spoke or smiled, Margaret looked best with her mouth close shut; for having one evening, in a romantic reverie, mistaken the hard claw of a fine rock lobster for the fish itself, in her attempts to masticate it she unfortunately broke two of her front teeth, which gave her rather an unpleasant appearance whenever she attempted to "*sweetly smile*."

These defects in her person, her health being not very good, and her nerves weak, and as her mother had, in giving *her* life, lost her own, made the excellent Edward peculiarly careful of shewing that partiality which he certainly could not avoid feeling for her elder sister.

He had indulged Margaret, on account of a long confinement from illness, with the perusal of those novels a neighbouring circulating library afforded; a subscription to which was afterwards continued by good-natured Ralph for his two nieces' amusement.

The effects of this reading, on a mind easily softened and naturally weak, is already perceptible to the reader in the character of Margaret. Mary read only to amuse an hour, and never suffered it to interfere with her more useful occupations; yet she was fond of literature; and her uncle Charles, with whom she was a decided favourite, had presented her with a small and elegant library, from the best approved writers for female improvement.

Margaret, in spite of all her father's indulgent kindness, imagined herself as one languishing under a severe parent's cruel rigidity; while her benefactor, her kind uncle Ralph, she looked upon as little better than a mere brute; toward her uncle Charles she wavered in her affections, and this wavering was, in some degree, mutual: in those intervals, which, it must be said, happened but seldom, when Margaret, by an imaginary new conquest, quitted her reading for the ornamenting of her person, and tried to make herself pleasant and agreeable, uncle Charles began to admire his niece Margaret, and really loved her for her truly compassionate nature; has been in those moments drawn in to *talk sentiment* with her, accompany her in her walks to some of the neighbouring cottages, (for Margaret knew all the heroines of romance did the same); and there Charles would drop a tear, with the ready shilling to the wants of indigence: then her uncle Charles was the only soul in the family congenial to her own, then he was extolled to the skies; the next day has thrown all this romantic edifice to the ground; for this beloved uncle is made the confidant of some ridiculous love-affair, or is condemned to hear her read through two or three pages of absurdity and inconsistency; he then becomes too much disgusted to contain his irritable temper, and he makes use of the same language to his delicate and persecuted niece (according to her account) as he would to a private soldier: Oh! she detests the very sight of uncle Charles, a *man of blood*, fit only to wade through fields of slaughter, or reside in a camp; while duty, inflexible duty obliges her to love her father, on whose grave countenance she seldom beholds a smile; oh! what would she not give could she but see a smile on that countenance beaming upon her! but alas! a

parent's wrath hangs over her head, she says, and she is the most miserable of created beings.

The heroine of a romance, she knows, was never happy, therefore she will yet look forward with hope to the winding up of her adventures, after she has experienced several additional and aggravated sorrows; till she has explored dark *unfathomable* caverns and dungeons, or has been confined in some high and *moss-grown* tower, through whose *subterraneous passages* her lover will enter, *wind up the ruined staircase* which leads to her horrible prison, from whence he will deliver her, and boldly present her to his *stern* and noble father, who will melt with love and paternal tenderness on the discovery of her heroic and intrinsic virtue.

The heart of the lively Mary, though susceptible, was yet her own; she superintended with alacrity and good humour the household affairs of her uncle; nor was she deficient in spinning, or any of those housewifely employments which would render her an useful farmer's wife; but she could unite gentility and industry, good sense and trifling, so happily, that all who saw, admired her, and all who knew her loved and esteemed her.

Margaret was very often in love; though at present there was one who was peculiarly the object of her notice: this was a young man who had come the preceding summer to make hay for her uncle, with some other itinerant labourers from Ireland: the lad had neither father nor mother; was as honest and industrious as he was poor, and gave fair promise of being an excellent under-servant; he could neither write nor read: but Ralph, who cared very little about the erudition of a servant, and indeed would often express his disapprobation of *Sunday Schools*, which only served, he used to say, to spoil those whose lot must be only to labour, and that we had much better servants before they were established; we believe he rather therefore preferred the ignorance of Phelim O'Gurphy, the abovementioned lad; and wanting a servant to go on errands, and occasionally work on the farm, took the Hibernian, to his great joy, to live with him in that capacity: but as Phelim cast his eyes towards the young ladies who were seated in the parlour, when he was called in to receive the welcome intelligence, Margaret immediately discovered homage, love, and reverence, in the eyes of the enamoured youth! Severely did she take herself to task for not instantly acquainting her father and uncles with his temerity in daring to aspire to her beauty; and she resolved to watch every opportunity of exercising her vengeance on the unfortunate and truly unconscious Phelim, till one day an incident occurred which convinced her that he could be no other than a nobleman in disguise!

His complexion, like that of many of his countrymen, was extremely fair, and though his face was burnt by the sun, his arms and bosom were white as those of the fairest female; otherwise his personal attractions were by no means conspicuous; for his figure was short and clumsy, his face broad and vacant, and his hair of a fiery *red*; which furnished Margaret with the idea of "Hyperion's curls," and *ringlets of gold!*

One sultry day, as she strolled in search of adventures over her uncle's meadows, she discovered, reposing at his full length, Phelim O'Gurphy; though it could not literally be called repose, as he appeared to be much agitated by some terrific dream; and as Irishmen, either waking or sleeping, are very apt to utter all their thoughts, the following words escaped him, in the true brogue, and all the native energy of his country: "Oh! help, holy mother of St. Patrick! Arrah! now, where is the good Duke of Tyrconnel?"



Margaret, who was utterly ignorant of the Irish peerage; and what titles were or were not extinct, as she gazed on the snowy whiteness of his wrist and throat, was now fully convinced that he was certainly the *Duke of Tyrconnel* in disguise! and that the *holy mother of St. Patrick* meant no other than the noble dame to whom he (no doubt a Knight of St. Patrick) owed his splendid birth; this noble mother was instantly created, from his calling her *holy*, by the prolific brain of Margaret, into the abbess of a nunnery; and it was most probable she reasoned with herself that she had been canonized by the Pope for a *saint!*

From that moment her whole thoughts became fixed on the high conquest she was convinced she had achieved over the heart of this *noble* and most *accomplished* youth.

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## CHAP. III.

## FASHIONABLE ORIGINALS.

O fashion! now a goddess, now a friend,  
 At whose *levee*, pride, folly, vice attend;  
 Thy vot'ries are of ev'ry rank and age;  
 All play the part of fool on *fashion's stage*.

THE AUTHOR.

THE letter which the Reverend Mr. Marsham had received, contained a few lines informing him the Right Honorable incumbent was coming to pass six weeks at his living; and as his retinue, composing his family and *tonish* friends, were weary of the watering-place they had just been honouring with their company, were to come with him, he had *favoured* his curate with the commission of ordering the house-keeper at the spacious parsonage-house to have the beds well-aired, and every thing in order to receive her master, his lady, and her sister; with three gentlemen of rank and fortune, together with an humble female friend.

The first of these gentlemen, Sir Charles Sefton, a wealthy baronet, was the avowed suitor of Lady Isabella Emerson, sister to Lady Caroline Leslie, the Rector's lady: the second was a young gentleman lately come to a very large estate, a Mr. Harrington, whom Lady Caroline, devoted to play, was endeavouring to *pidgeon*, till she *plucked him bare*, and he might then give place to some other who should be more *full in feather*. At present, the money of Mr. Harrington, always readily lent, was very useful to the Honorable and Reverend Mr. Leslie, whose paternal inheritance, and the annual income of two very rich benefices, had been much exhausted to supply the unbounded extravagance of himself and his lady.

The third gentleman was Sir Edward Harrington, who had come down into the country, not from his love for the society of those he had accompanied, but merely to watch over and guard the oft-times thoughtless conduct of a nephew whom he loved as his own child.

The humble friend was a Mrs. Kennedy, the widow of an Irish fortune-hunter, who, after having spent an ample fortune which the lady had generously given him the sole disposal of when she gave him her hand, as she was verging towards the decline of life, left her with only her talents to support her, in that precarious, little-to-be envied occupation of an authoress!\*

By adulatory dedications to the great, her own respectable family, rare abilities, and quickness in composing her *little works*, she had ensured their patronage, and often made one in their country excursions: she was particularly welcome to the Lady Isabella, whose dearest delight consisted in *quizzing*, and who, in Mrs. Kennedy, found a continual *butt*.

Though Mrs. Kennedy was possessed of unusual talents, yet there was an obscurity in the expression of her thoughts which often puzzled the reader, and made him wonder where he was: to indulge a pretty and flowery expression, she would sacrifice all sense,

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\**Historique*.

and substitute for it inexplicable absurdity: to pourtray the “*wings of pity*,” or the humid drop of compassion, she has, in the confined metre of poetry, rendered her meaning wholly unintelligible.

Her general conduct was rather of the artful kind; and she knew well how to preserve her rich and titled friends; and thus never wanted an elegant home or costly presents.

The Right Honorable Rector’s character will be easily discovered by his conversation and conduct; he was far from being a credit to his sacred profession; and often did he execrate the hour which made him wear the cloth: the conduct of his wife, or the example she set, were totally indifferent to him; though he was too polite ever to treat her ill, or deny her one of the many and exorbitant claims she laid on his purse, while there remained in it any thing to give her.\*

Lady Caroline Leslie was the very life of fashion, and gave in to every species of *tonish* dissipation; but gambling was her prevailing fault: she would have been handsome, had not the continual vigils of deep play rendered her complexion too sallow, and her eyes too hollow for any art to restore to their native hue and lustre: she was not averse to gallantry, and so ready to assist it in another, that she has even facilitated the elopement of a sister from her husband, that she might fly to the arms of another *married* lover!\*

But the devotion of Lady Caroline to the gaming-table had hitherto prevented her from taking any part herself in the annals of *indiscretion*, vulgarly called *crim. con.*

Lady Isabella Emerson was like her sister, a great votary of fashion, but detested play, except that kind of play which a love of satire afforded her; and which the modern *quiz* and daily *hoax* were calculated to give to her mischievous abilities.

Like Margaritta, she was very fond of modern publications, but her studies were of a different kind, and all consisted of false systems: the deluding sophistry of some free-thinking German authors, with whose language she was well acquainted, and whose dangerous and delusive principles she imbibed; from whose fascinating descriptions she found vice stripped of its hideous appearance, and wearing an angel’s form; while for her lighter reading she perused the loose sentiments contained in the French novels of *Faublas*; *Le Fils naturel*, and all the dangerous works of Diderot, and other revolutionary writers. The effects of such studies on a mind like that of Lady Isabella’s may well be conceived; marriage she held in utter contempt, openly expatiated on the folly of all the outward ceremonies of religion, and was a very pretty female atheist.\*

These principles her reverend brother-in-law never took any pains to correct, alleging, that perhaps she was right, as far as any thing he knew to the contrary!

Sir Charles Sefton, her admirer, who was turned of forty, and owned to *three and thirty*, took all possible pains to conceal his real age from the quick eyes of his shrewd and penetrating mistress: he had been so much the martyr to the various vices of fashion, that he looked more than fifty-five; but his family and connexions were all *noble*, himself immensely *rich*, and he was therefore looked upon by the friends of Lady Isabella as a most desirable match; and her youth, beauty, and vivacity, made this whimsical *beau* imagine himself to be deeply in love: he really idolized her for her love of ridicule, so prevalent in his own nature; and pictured to himself the happy hours they should pass

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\**Historique.*

\*To our modern female reformist, *Mary Woolstonecroft*, and her husband, she was indebted for these latter sentiments, so uncongenial with our “*national prejudices*,” as she chose to call them.

together, in mutually laughing at the whole circle of their friends and acquaintance; while his consummate vanity would not suffer him to see, that *he* chiefly was the decided mark at which Lady Isabella pointed the most envenomed arrows of her sarcastic wit.

Sir Edward Harrington was a worthy baronet, who had been some years a widower, was at present childless, but had adopted his nephew, Mr. Harrington, as his heir, provided the tenor of his conduct was such as this excellent uncle could approve; otherwise, well and dearly though he loved him, as he knew he was already rich enough, without his assistance, he should leave his own large fortune to better hands.

Sir Edward's character was of a peculiar kind, in this our day: he was the friend of every worthy man! to such, however ungifted by birth, honours or riches, in the midst of the most splendid company, were the thoughts of his heart laid open, and his conversation alone directed: it was a painful sacrifice indeed, to a noble nature like his, to accompany the thoughtless and unprincipled set of beings he now was found amongst; but his too accommodating nephew had entangled himself with them; and as he had so united his fate to that of young Harrington, Sir Edward resolved to watch over, and prevent, if possible, the fatal contagion of example over too easy a nature.

Mr. Harrington, in person was manly and elegant, his manners polite and sweetly fascinating, his heart benevolent, and his well cultivated understanding naturally excellent; but his principles were wavering and inconstant: he loved and courted fashion in her every form; but the nightly admonitions and reflections of his pillow often severely reprehended the conduct of the day. Devoted to the sex, he thought no sacrifice too great for the indulgence of all their little foibles or inclinations, however glaring or capricious. Though he was by no means fond of play, yet he was ensnared by the fine person and polite manners of Lady Caroline, to lose to her immense sums, and sit for whole nights as if *nailed* to her card-table; captivated by the enchanting witcheries of Lady Isabella's wit and playful manner, he had addressed her in a strain of ardour in which his heart had no share.

Early instructed in the purest principles of virtue and religion, he once paid unaffected homage to those sacred names; now he allowed himself to tread in the mazes of scepticism, when he beheld one of Devotion's ministers scoff at her precepts, while he revelled in luxury, and enjoyed, or seemed to enjoy, every species of worldly prosperity; when his pious and virtuous curate, with his narrow pittance, struggled through life with difficulty, and the hand of anxious care had stepped hastily before old age to implant the wrinkles on his forehead.

The fair and captivating atheist would often, with a smile and a look that would have added grace to an Hebe, tell him, and seem to speak certain conviction to his mind, that we certainly know what *this* life is;—but, from the *other*,

“— No traveller returns  
“To tell us *what* it is!”

Though it was not in the power of Sir Charles Sefton to warm the heart of Lady Isabella, yet she felt the full power of the hood-winked deity, in the fine person and elegant acquirements of the seductive Harrington: how often did she dwell on the fond

idea of the rapture it would afford her, to live with him “the life of honour!” how often has she turned in disgust from her declared admirer, and mentally exclaimed with Eloisa,

“Not Caesar’s Empress would I deign to prove:

“Oh! make me *mistress* to the man I love!”

With much anxiety did the penetrating Sir Edward discover the failings of his nephew; which, though they took their rise from a mind too easily warped by fashion, had yet attained no fixed seat in the heart, notwithstanding he dreaded and trembled for their consequences; he saw, with extreme pain, the partiality of Lady Isabella towards him, and how *warmly*, not to say at times how *licentiously* it had been returned by Frederic Harrington!

Sir Edward was often fearful that Lady Isabella had made a real and permanent impression on his darling Frederic, and he would have shuddered at the bare idea of seeing such a woman the wife of his beloved *protégé*, whose gallantry, sometimes on the other hand, towards Lady Caroline Leslie, had made him tremble; he knew the total want of principle in that lady; and besides, Sir Edward was old-fashioned enough to think, that though all *virtuous* and even *affectionate* friendship between the sexes is allowable, yet, that very pointed gallantry in a young man towards a young married woman is as *reprehensible* as it is *imprudent*, and sets a dangerous example to the ignorant and untaught.

He had therefore often felt much alarm, and had been ready to break through that taciturnity he had determined to preserve, when he had beheld his nephew, as he has won from Lady Caroline a considerable sum, fall at her feet, kiss her hand with rapture, and solemnly declare that permission amply repaid him for all she had lost: and once Sir Edward was really tempted to take him by the arm, and lead him out of the room, when after being a most successful winner, and my lady not being able immediately to pay her losings, he cancelled the debt on her lips.

To *see* Frederic Harrington, was sufficient to *admire* him, and to be often in his company, was to love and esteem him: Lady Caroline grew, by degrees, less fond of play; though it still remained her darling sin: Sir Edward trembled for his nephew amidst this dissipated circle, shuddered at the thought of his sullying the columns of a newspaper by a detail of his trial at Westminster-Hall; and LESLIE *versus* HARRINGTON, darted in terrific vision on his mind’s eye, every time he took up the MORNING POST, HERALD, or other vehicles of fashionable intelligence.

At other times he would blame himself for his anxiety; and think, as he was growing old, and uninitiated in the tenets of the new school, perhaps he might be getting surly and cynical, or had entirely forgotten the bright sunshine of his youth. “No, no,” he would often say to himself, “Frederic can never be so preposterous as to be in love with *both* the sisters at once! but what may not the advances of two fine unprincipled young women be able to effect on a sanguine disposition? God defend him from seducing the wife of his friend, however *pretended* that friend may be; and oh! may I never see him the husband of that mischievous little infidel, Lady Isabella.”

The house of Mr. Marsham had a view of the gate which opened into the front garden of the parsonage; and at the upper windows of the farm-house, Mary and Margaret had stationed themselves to behold the great folks on their arrival.

First, rattled on in high style, the Rector's barouche and four, driven by the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie, habited in a coachman's coat, with three enormous capes; and, as he was an highly approved member of the *whip-club*, he drove in such an admirable style, that, had not the good lady his mother been a truly chaste and virtuous character, people might have thought he owed his birth to a GREGSONIAN *indiscretion*.

In the barouche were seated Lady Caroline, Frederic Harrington, and his uncle; and rapidly darting after, with all the velocity of a charioteer, figured away Sir Charles Sefton, in his lofty phæton, accompanied by Lady Isabella Emerson, arrayed in equestrian *costume*: a small green cap added to all that knowing archness of her countenance which was its peculiar character; while an habit of the same colour, laced with narrow gold binding, as was her cap, and a pair of green satin half-boots, completed the fair-one's livery.

Sir Charles, adopting with true knight-errantry his lady's colours, was dressed in a jacket of the same summer hue; and his white hat, *lined* only with *green*, gave a relief to the *verdant* appearance of the dashing pair: but surely, the noble baronet had not studied Ovid, who advises those *only* who are possessed of the roseate complexion of youth, to wear this symbol of perpetual spring; for the yellow countenance of Sir Charles, in spite of all the cosmetics he made use of, received an additional hue, of the cadaverous kind, from the grass-tinged lining of his superfine beaver.

Wrapped closely in a fine India shawl, which being drawn so tight round her fine form, that it appeared her only covering, skipped out of her carriage, with all the grace and agility of a wood-nymph, Lady Caroline Leslie, disclaiming all assistance from her two attending beaux, who mutually offered their aid; but she was soon persuaded to take the arm of the elegant Frederic, and the trees of the avenue which led to the house quickly obscured them from the eyes of the gazing sisters.—“That,” said Mary, “is the finest gentleman I ever saw! the youngest, I mean, of the two who accompany Lady Caroline.” “Oh!” said the emphatic Margaret, “I can look at no one but that *knight in green*, who I am certain, from his complexion, is some foreign prince: they remind me, dear Mary, of the green night and his lady: happy, happy fair-one, who is seated beside him in his car of triumph!” The laughter which Mary was unable to suppress, highly offended her sister, who regarded her with looks of contemptuous pity. “I declare,” said Mary, “I think the gentleman must be the happiest of the two, for she is really a very pretty lady; and I am sure no one need envy her being seated by the side of such a yellow, unhealthy looking being as the one you have been pleased to dub a prince: what a fortunate event, my dear girl, it would have been for many a needy adventurer, had you been an absolute monarch! How many princes and nobles would have owed their origin to the prepossession you might have received in their favour, from their personal appearance only!”

Margaret made no answer, but gazed after the figure of Sir Charles as long as she could perceive the least vestige of it gliding through the trees; then shutting the window, and heaving a deep-drawn sigh, she accompanied her sister down stairs.

## CHAP. IV.

## A MORNING VISIT, AND AN INVITATION.

Blest with each gift of nature and of art,  
 And wanting nothing but an honest heart,  
 Grown all to all, from no one vice exempt,  
 And most contemptible, to shun contempt;  
 A constant bounty, which no friend has made,  
 An Angel tongue, which no man can persuade;  
 A fool, with more of wit than half mankind,  
 Too rash for thought, for action too refin'd.

POPE.

MR. MARSHAM was truly respected by all the country, as an opulent and worthy gentleman-farmer, and his genteel birth and respectable connexions made all the higher classes of people desirous of cultivating his acquaintance. Ralph, however, disclaimed all general visitors; and, as independent in his manners as in his fortune, he took the freedom of *choosing* his associates, and the society which composed them he determined should be as *small* as it was *select*.

To his brother's Right Honourable Rector, his doors, of course, were thrown open; and Ralph relaxed a little from his usual bluntness, to the great man, out of pure friendship for his brothers.

No being was more beloved than Edward, by all the parishioners; no one more disliked and dreaded than the Honourable and Reverend Mr. Leslie; but the country-folks had wit enough to keep their thoughts of him and his family to themselves.—Charles Marsham, who, though no longer very young, was yet in possession of youth enough, and health and strength sufficient to embark again in his favourite profession; and the constant and flattering promises of the Reverend Mr. Leslie, to procure him, through his interest and influence, rapid promotion, induced the kind-hearted Ralph to be more obliging in his outward manners, than really accorded with his sincerity, to the man he inwardly despised: not so Charles; for him it was an utter impossibility to cringe, in the smallest degree, even to that man from whose favour he hoped to gain an ascendancy in his military career; no, he would contradict the powerful Rector, where he thought him wrong, with all the free impetuosity with which he would rebuke his own brothers or nieces.

The Rector, soon after his arrival, hastened to pay his respects at the farm-house, assuring the honest *trio* that he had really languished to shake hands with three of the best fellows in the universe; and that he now purposely called to request their company to dinner on the following Thursday: the day being Saturday on which he chose to honour them by a call, he thus continued, addressing Edward in particular: "Upon my soul, my dear fellow, I am sadly unhinged by a succession of late hours, and have such a confounded head-ach continually upon me, that I must request you will do duty for me to-morrow."—"With much pleasure, sir," replied Edward, "but I fear your parishioners will

be much disappointed, and particularly Lady Wringham, who has delayed the christening of her infant till it was almost seven months old, in order that it might be baptised by your hands.”—“What,” says the reverend Rector, “has that *old cat* brought forth another child? Well, she gives devilish good *douceurs*, and I know she is so particular, that she will have the dear *cubs* made literally members of the church, by having them brought there, like an honest old laundress as she was,\* —so I’ll e’en try to get through a sermon, because if I give out that I am indisposed, I cannot with any face sprinkle the monkey-forehead of Lady Wringham’s brat; no, no,—hang it, if one has no conscience, one must pretend to a little.”

The virtuous Edward could scarce suppress his indignation, but he was poor and dependent, his Rector *rich* and *noble!* he therefore bridled his thoughts, though with very apparent difficulty, especially from the reply of Mr. Leslie to the following request:

“Sir,” said Edward, “the poor woman’s child, at the second cottage on the right of your park, is so extremely ill, that she would esteem herself under a lasting obligation to you, if you would be so kind to baptize it at home, as the apothecary tells her, the poor infant’s life, by great care, may be preserved; but if taken out in the air, at present, it will inevitably cause its death.”—“Never, never,” hastily replied Mr. Leslie, “will I christen any of the poor at their own dwellings: I insist upon it, that she brings the unhappy little wretch to church; and suppose it should die from cold, so much the better for the parents; she has more mouths now in her dirty hovel than she is able to feed!\* But oh! hang the *shop*, my dear fellow, do not let us, as Lenitive says in the Prize, be “*nailed to the counter like a bad shilling!*” I came to ask you to dine with me on Thursday; I mean to give my parishioners a *hop* in the evening, illuminate the park, and let off a few *crackers*, in honour of the Austrians having beat the French; but you, my good friends, and the divine girls, your nieces, must positively come to dinner.”

“We are highly sensible of the honour you do us, sir,” said Ralph: “on such an occasion, we cannot refuse your polite invitation, and will certainly honour ourselves by waiting on you.”—“Yes, sir,” said Edward, “and now that I hear from you, that the glorious news is really authentic, myself and family will also accept the invitation to a ball with sincere pleasure.” “So then,” said the Rector, as he saw the young ladies enter the room, and giving a very particular glance at Mary, “I am obliged only to Archduke Charles for the company of you and these divine creatures!”—“Pardon me, sir,” replied Edward, “I too well know the distance between me, your humble curate, and that of your noble family; my daughters are destined to move only in the sphere of humble mediocrity; your family glitters in the court of a monarch, the brilliancy of which is only eclipsed by the lustre of his virtues; but, on such an occasion as the present, the grateful incense of humility finds equal acceptance with the triumphs of the high and mighty, at the crush of usurpation and the victory of a virtuous warrior.”

“Pardon me, sir,” said the right honourable Rector, as he gazed on the blushing face of Mary, pressed her hand with ardour, and turned his back upon her sister, “pardon me, my good sir, these lovely creatures would add glory to a *crown!*—do not, pray, my good fellow, do not so depreciate their value.”

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*



Mary turned from his bold and ardent gaze, then withdrawing her hand with some dignity, she said, "Oh sir! do not think our minds are so untutored or so weak as to be pleased with flattery so very pointed and gross."

Mary then seated herself at the other end of the room, and her father, who felt for her, said, "My girls, sir, are unused to the society of those who move in a sphere like that to which you are ever accustomed; and therefore I have never sought to introduce them, as guests, into that polished order of beings with whom I know it will never be their lot, in future, to associate."

"And why not? my good sir," said the Rector with quickness; "the acquisition of such young ladies as the Misses Marsham must confer honour on society, instead of deriving it."

Margaret was not deaf on this occasion, and neither was she blind; she could see too plainly that the pointed looks of the Rector towards her sister meant that *she* alone was considered in the hyperbolic eulogium.

Unmindful of his sacred profession, or his marriage vows, the Reverend Mr. Leslie certainly beheld, with many a degree of painful comparison, in unison with a softer sentiment, the innocent, blooming, and lovely Mary, and contrasted her with the gay, unfeeling and unprincipled wife of his bosom; and if the conquest over her mind and person was not attended with too much difficulty, it was his settled determination to establish her in elegant lodgings, endow her with a comfortable settlement, and leave her—when he was weary of her! For the other girl, he used to tell his family he thought her confounded ugly, and a romantic fool; but to be too particular in his attentions to one sister, while he totally neglected the other, would be to shew himself even a greater fool than her he despised.

"Well," continued he, resuming his friendly chit-chat, "you promise me, all of you, to come; I hope we shall be very gay, and I will do all in my power to render the day and evening agreeable to these lovely creatures (taking a hand of each, but looking at Mary with much softness and meaning in his eyes): "good morning to you all;" and as he leaped, with wonderful agility, the paling in front of the house, they all remarked at once, "Who would think that was a clergyman?"

And who would indeed think it was one of that serious profession, arrayed in nankin jacket and trowsers, a green beaver hat, and a Belcher handkerchief tied round his throat; but soon a dashing pair of females presented themselves, and turned back with him to the farm-house.

"We were in sight of your house, Mr. Marsham," said Lady Caroline, throwing herself into an easy chair, and extending her pretty foot and ankle, while she discovered a pair of fringed pantaloons, covered only with a thin muslin petticoat, and an open leno pelisse, "we were coming after this stray sheep of mine, and have made him turn back again."

"If my brother *turns back*," said the lively Lady Isabella, "I fear he will have a dreadful path to retread; do you not think so, sir?" added she, laying her hand familiarly on the shoulder of the Reverend Mr. Marsham; "my sister talks of stray sheep; now thank my stars, I am not one, for I never belonged to your pious fold, and,

"Pleas'd to the last, I'll crop the *flow'ry* food."

“And is it not a pity,” replied Edward, bowing with unaffected gravity, “that so lovely a lamb should, unconsciously, be marked out for sacrifice?”—“What do you mean?” said she, somewhat abashed. “Sacrificed,” replied Edward, “on the altar of fashion and dissipation.”—“Oh! no,” answered she with some haughtiness, “I am not *sacrificed*, because I offer myself *willingly*; and am ever determined, in spite of parents, husband, or clergy, to act in every thing as I please.”

Charles looked at her, in spite of her beauty, with disgust; and from that time conceived a dislike against her; for though he hated a cold and tame character, yet he had an utter aversion to what is generally styled a woman of spirit.

But Charles had been himself a handsome fellow, and was so sensitive to the power of beauty in the softer sex, that this sensibility was rather his weak side: Lady Isabella, with great sweetness, advanced towards him, and took his *un-reluctant* hand; “Come now,” said she, “why do you give me that look, just like some American savage!”

Margaret was captivated immediately; the sweet eyes of Lady Isabella, the association of ideas, that the term *American savage* brought to her mind, was wonderful in its operation, and she looked on Lady Isabella as little less than a divinity: the sly lady also viewed the pensive Margaritta; and not only looked upon her as fair game for her satiric talents, but her ladyship’s *penchant* for the elegant Harrington encreasing daily, she had imbibed some soft romantic sentiments with the passion of love, which made her find a *confidante* an absolute requisite.

She twisted the drapery of her long shawl around her with peculiar elegance, and swam across the room to that space occupied by the nieces. “My sweet interesting girl!” said she, pressing the hand of Margaret, and with a soft sigh, fixing her eyes on her countenance, “how happy am I to see you! and what pleasure do I enjoy, in prospect, at the pleasing intelligence of your accepting our invitation for Thursday—oh! my love,” added she, lowering her voice, “I have much to impart to a congenial soul like yours!” At the same time her ladyship looked on the lovely Mary with not only an haughty *sang froid*, but even with a degree of spite; and composed of those expressive characteristics, Lady Isabella’s countenance was the direct index of her mind: for so much did she know of that grand theatre, the world; so often did she make one in the high and splendid circles of festivity, that she easily saw, since her last visit to Eglantine farm, how much the form and face of the then promising Mary was improved, and that she was in full possession of that fascination, that unobtruding, though playful expression, which would decidedly give her a preference with all the males wherever she appeared.

Lady Isabella was sure to be admired; but she had often, not only competitors, but superiors in personal attractions to contend with; this made her carefully improve her talent for wit, in order to render herself irresistible: yet Lady Isabella, by wearing this dangerous weapon, defeated her purpose; she was sometimes so cuttingly severe, that with all the smiling witchery of her countenance, she has been thought ill-natured, and consequently shunned; at other times she has felt herself low-spirited, and her *efforts* at saying smart things (in which she was sure to fail, for all wit should be spontaneous) has caused her to be classed only amongst the *would-be-witty* triflers of quality.

Margaret, at the flattering address of her ladyship, let fall her eyelids, and timidly lifted them again; and while she endeavoured to express, by her eyes, every thing that was

sweet and lovely, she gave them a turn very much like that defect which we call squinting; and smiling, as she was forming a speech to express her gratitude for the honour done her, she shewed the ruins of her mouth, and Lady Isabella with great difficulty suppressed her laughter.

Lady Caroline looked at her diminutive gold watch, and found it was getting late; she had laid an enormous bet upon what time the morning sun would be off the last window of the dining-parlour, and she must absolutely be present at the decision: she therefore instantly rose, and took her leave of the good family with a *condescending* and *protecting* air. Lady Isabella again whispered Margaret, and told her how much she longed for Thursday! gave Charles a familiar nod; a knowing quizzical curtsey to Ralph; and with a bow full of grace and sweetness, pressed her hand to her heart, and regarded Edward, as he opened the parlour-door for the polite visitants.

The Reverend Mr. Leslie seemed to take leave of no one but Mary, gave her a very particular look, and sighed audibly.

And now the *maitre d'hôtel* of Lady Caroline, the house-keeper, and all the upper servants were busied in displaying their taste, and making a most ample use of the purse and credit of their master, in each of which they were lavish to a degree of prodigality; while the subaltern servants were busied in every laborious preparation for the grand gala of the approaching Thursday.

Nor were the girls at the farm-house less occupied in arranging their dresses for the occasion; and though Margaret was most wakeful for the important cause, yet we will not say that Mary had so little of the female in her, as not to lay awake some quarter of an hour or more each night, in reckoning upon that elegant pleasure in perspective which she so seldom enjoyed, and which delightful vision would, no doubt, be realised amongst such a splendid circle. Oh youth! delightful season of pleasure, enhanced by expectation! why are thy hours so fleeting? Why, in the stages of maturity, and even in high meridian, does the sparkling cup, so lately sweetened with felicity, present a draft so insipid? and why stands age so ready and unsolicited to throw in her bitter and unpalatable ingredients? Rash mortal, cease to murmur—wise and beneficent, O Providence, are all thy decrees! the ardour and error of youth is chastened by the still and tranquil pleasures of mature experience and in age the recollection of good deeds performed in the earlier stages of life will turn the noxious draught to sweetness and composure.

## CHAP. V.

## THE DINNER AND BALL.

Up springs the dance along the lighted dome,  
Mix'd, and evolv'd, a thousand sprightly ways.

THOMSON.

—————On her rankled soul  
The gaming fury falls; and in one gulph  
Of total ruin; honour, virtue, peace,  
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong sink.

*Ibid.*

ON the long expected Thursday, rather too soon, with shame we confess it, at the hour of *five*, a full hour or more before dinner, arrived at the parsonage Mr. Marsham and his suite, consisting of his brothers and nieces: the footman gazed at them with wonder as he ushered them into the spacious drawing-room, and said, he would inform his lady of their arrival, but she had just then retired to dress after her morning's game at piquet with Mr. Harrington; and his master had not yet returned from his accustomed walk: Mrs. Kennedy was not even at leisure to receive them, as she was finishing the last stanza of a sonnet to Cupid, before she could possibly attend to the frivolous duties of the toilette. However, after the Marsham family had been seated about half an hour, down came Lady Isabella, in a loose, wrapping, muslin pelisse; her hair, on one side, in beautiful ringlets, *en papillotes* on the other. "This is the abode of liberty," said she gaily, "and I am come *en vrai deshabelle* to welcome you all: but, permit me, while I put the finishing hand to my toilette, to take my sweet girl with me." But as her ladyship turned to make Charles Marsham some answer to an handsome compliment which he paid her, she took the hand of Mary, instead of Margaret, and running with her up the wide staircase, said to her, "My dearest creature, how I have longed for to-day!" when turning to embrace her, she discovered her mistake, and felt almost ready to push poor Mary down the stairs; however, she put a good face upon the matter, and said, with all the good humour she could assume, "but pray, child, where is your sister? Why did not she follow us? It must be more pleasant for you both to stay with me in my apartment till I am dressed, than be with your father and uncles; you have enough of them *every day!*"

"Your ladyship does us honour," said Mary, "and with your permission, I will desire my sister to come up stairs."—"Do, my dear," said her ladyship, "but do not let me confine *you*, do not come up again unless you like it."

Mary had sense enough to see that Lady Isabella did not wish for *her* company; and also that, from what motive she knew not, she gave a decided preference to her sister; but at this the good-natured girl rather rejoiced than repined.

She not only loved to see her sister noticed, but she also found Lady Isabella by no means of a character to excite either her respect or regard; she tripped down stairs again, but not having minded, in her *ascent*, which way she had turned, she took a contrary

direction when she *descended*, and instead of finding herself in the drawing-room, she discovered she had entered a long apartment, decorated with coloured lamps and various devices, in which an elegant cold supper was laid out on the several tables.

She quitted it immediately, without staying to admire its tasteful abundance, and opened the third door from this spacious apartment: a young gentleman, half dressed, and reading a pamphlet, met her eye; he regarded her with peculiar interest, and advanced forward with a polite freedom, mingled with respect and trepidation (for Mary had imparted to Frederic Harrington

“A new pulse, unfelt before”);

“Permit me, madam,” said he, in a tremulous accent, as he observed the deep confusion of Mary, to which he was fearful of adding, “permit me to conduct you to the drawing-room. If you will pardon,” added he, “the grotesque appearance of such a half-dressed escort, I will do myself the honour of leading you to your friends; for I am much deceived,” continued he, as they walked onwards, “if it is not Miss Marsham whom I now have the honour of addressing!”

The charming and polite ease of Harrington now entirely relieved Mary from her embarrassment, and she chatted with all the unrestrained and charming *naïveté*, which was her peculiar characteristic.

With all the vivacity and heedlessness of youth, she had not observed that she had turned down another staircase than that on which she had ascended to the apartment of Lady Isabella, and was soon made sensible of her mistake, as she took her way with Frederic to that leading to the drawing-room; on which flight of stairs, having descended a few steps, Lady Isabella now accosted her, in a voice almost unintelligible from rage and jealousy—“Is your sister, Miss Marsham, coming up, or no?”

“I have not yet seen her, my lady,” said Mary, with the most tranquil innocence. “Where then, in the name of heaven, have you been?” said her ladyship; and without waiting for an answer she banged the door of her apartment with violence, and threw herself on an ottomane in all the agony of jealousy.

Several minutes had elapsed, each of which had seemed an age to the wretched Isabella, since Mary left her—she had descended two or three stairs to see if Margaret was coming; the first objects that met her eye, were Harrington and Mary! Harrington in his dressing-gown, the powder only half wiped from his face, his feet in slippers, his animated and expressive eyes fixed on the countenance of Mary, who regarded him with more than common complacency. “Shall such a little rustic wretch as that,” thought she, “dare to enter the lists with me, and contend for the heart of the charming Frederic? Never—no, never, without feeling the weight of my severest vengeance.”

During these reflections of the lady, Harrington had nearly reached the drawing-room door, towards which he waved his disengaged hand, and bowing elegantly over the soft one which he held in his, took his leave; while Mary, giving a gentle sigh, secretly thought he had left her too soon.

Lady Isabella, her cheeks glowing with agitation, and her heart palpitating with various emotions, reclined on her ottomane, awaiting the arrival of Margaret; what to make of the scene she had witnessed she knew not: Mary had not reached the drawing-

room since she left her; she had seen her in the company of Frederic, and looking more charmingly attractive than she had thought her capable of: but the *deshabille* of Harrington was a mystery she could not account for; he who was so careful in general of his exterior appearance; she had beheld his *half-powdered* face rivetted as close as decorum would permit to that of the visibly gratified Mary. "Oh!" thought she, "these country girls are so full of intrigue, with all their pretended innocence, that no doubt this seemingly accidental meeting was planned, and Frederic and that little puss have been long acquainted—and shall Isabella Emerson stand forth as a rival competitor with that obscure little creature? No, never! From this moment I cast the mean-spirited Harrington from my heart, and I should not care if I was to marry Sir Charles Sefton to-morrow!"—Presently, at the glad summons she had received from her ladyship, entered Margaret in tears, which she had silently shed, as she affected to look out of a window ever since, what she thought, the caprice of quality had deprived her of the fair Isabella's affections, and had given her sister the preference.

The negligent posture of the afflicted lady, the Turkish *lit de repos* on which she had thrown her lovely form, made the fertile brain of Margaret fancy herself in a Turkish harem; and falling on her knees, she was about to prostrate her face to the ground, when Lady Isabella, raising her up, said, "My sweet, dear girl, what is the matter? Why these tears? Are you, like me, a fellow-sufferer? and does thy gentle and susceptible heart feel the pangs of unrequited love?"

Margaret now recollected where she was, and said, "Is it possible, that the beautiful Lady Isabella can sigh for any one in vain? Such, my dear lady, I trust is not *my* lot: but I wept, because you honoured me with your friendship and promised confidence: alas! I dreaded lest my sister had stepped in to rival me in the place I hold in your affections."—"Never, my dear girl," replied Lady Isabella, with violence and energy; "Oh! sit down, and I will tell you all."—But the first dinner-bell ringing, delayed the important confidence for the present; and Lady Isabella flying to her toilette, found, from the glow on her cheeks, that she must rub off all her *rouge*, if she did not wish to appear as vulgarly red as a country milk-maid. This did not well accord with the romantic ideas of Margaret; all the heroines she had ever read of, were indebted to nature alone for their *miraculous beauty*; however, she knew but little of fashionable life, and thought every thing that was practised by her quality friend must be right.

When the two ladies entered the drawing-room together, they found it filled by the sociable and friendly party which were selected, *sans ceremonie*, to partake of the Rector's sumptuous dinner; amongst whom were the rich Sir John Wringham and his lady: but Lady Isabella cast round her anxious eyes, and found *one* of the dinner-party was yet wanting; this was the culprit Harrington: and she now, with all the negligence of unfeeling fashion left her new friend to shift for herself; and amidst the "how d'ye's," and "what a warm day this is, &c. &c." as she imparted that *important intelligence* to each one separately, she appeared not even to know that her beloved *confidante* was in the room: at length she threw herself into a kind of recess, where a *tête-à-tête* conversation-chair offered a vacant place: Sir Charles Sefton half rose to occupy it, but she almost killed him by a frown, and sent her enquiring eye towards the door, where yet stood the timid Margaret; but the poor girl was totally unnoticed by her, for her eye sought Harrington only, and Margaret durst not take courage to cross the apartment, in order to

take the vacant seat by her ladyship. Lady Isabella, however, soon gave a knowing look to Sir Charles, and spelt with her fingers, on the trimming of her sleeve, the word "QUIZ!"

Sir Charles rose immediately: "Lovely creature," half-whispered he to Margaret, "permit me to hand you to a seat;" and placing himself behind her chair, he poured forth such a volley of hyperbolic, ridiculous compliments, that had not the mind of Margaritta been weak in the extreme, she must have been convinced that the noble Baronet was only diverting himself at her expence: in the mean time all the gaiety of Lady Isabella seemed to return at the mischievous sport; but whenever she cast her eyes on Mary, and beheld how captivating she looked, anger and envy clouded her features; and it was severally remarked, either inwardly, or by the different *duos* round the room, to each other, how very ill Lady Isabella Emerson looked!

Presently the door opened, and Harrington, the elegant Harrington, his person adorned with all the auxiliaries of tasteful and gentleman-like dress, entered the room! every eye was turned towards him; but Mary cast hers down, blushed and trembled, yet she knew not why.

With a grace and ease peculiar to himself, he addressed them all, and was strongly tempted to take the vacant seat by the side of Mary, who was placed by Lady Wringham on a *sofa pour trois*; but,

"Still the world prevail'd, and its dread laugh,  
"Which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn,"

prevailed, for Frederic had the world's pride amongst his several foibles; he thought it would degrade him conspicuously to notice the *protegee* niece of a farmer, the daughter only of a country curate!

He therefore, with little deliberation, took his corner in the recess, by the gratified Lady Isabella, and never turned his head once towards Mary, while *her* eyes often unconsciously wandered towards the seat he filled. Margaret was in high spirits at her imaginary conquest, and all seemed pleased but Mary, who was doomed to endure the conversation and ignorant remarks of Lady Wringham, who declared to the Reverend Mr. Marsham, "If she had no *little ones*, how happy she should be in having *sitch* a companion always to live with her as *Miss!*"

It now wanted a quarter of an hour to six; "The hour," said Lady Caroline, "we generally dine at in the country; though I declare I have no appetite till eight, my usual hour in town."

"Well!" said Lady Wringham, "for my part, I always *dines* at three; and I *thinks* that a *wery* good hour! but every one to their liking; *ar'nt* I right, Mr. Leslie?"

"I am so partial to your ladyship," said the Reverend Theodore Leslie, "that I think all you do must be right; and henceforth I should like to dine at three myself, that I might think that you and I were, at least in one action, employed alike."

"La! well, I declare you are *sitch* a *funny* man, Mr. Leslie: well, I declare, my love," continued she, addressing Sir John, "if our parson is not absolutely making love to me."

"Mr. Leslie, *lovey*, does you and me much honour, I am sure," said the little man of four-feet-eight, rising and bowing profoundly.

“Well, but do you know,” said his talkative rib, “if I *ha’n’t* been talking politics here with our curate and the captain his brother!”

“Yes,” said Charles, “this good lady has been rejoicing with us, that the little usurper is at last likely to meet his deserts.”

“Oh! I don’t know,” said the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie, who was always fond of argument and contradiction, “I yet think,—mind—I by no means desire it,—*au contraire*, I assure you, but I do really think that Boney will beat them all at last. My dear fellow, he has such armies, it is utterly impossible to conquer him.”—“Upon my soul, sir,” said Charles, with some warmth, “I am very sorry to hear any Englishman say so; particularly any one who ranks high in life: in the first place, it looks as if they wished the villain to prosper, for, as the old song says,

“What we *wish* to be true, we are apt to believe;”

and in the next instance, a noble and wealthy man must be extremely weak to wish it, as the success of Buonaparte must, in the end, prove the destruction of all the rich and titled men in Europe.”

The fashionable Mr. Leslie turned on his heel, and only laughed at the energy of the honest Lieutenant, who turning to Lady Wringham, near to whom he was seated in a chair by her sofa, said, “By heavens, I should like to see that Buonaparte tortured for a twelvemonth!”—“And *sarve* him right,” replied his fair companion.

“Pray,” squeaked Mrs. Kennedy across the room, addressing the Reverend Edward Marsham, “have you read *Coelebs in search of a Wife?*”

“Yes, madam,” replied the curate.

“And what is your opinion of it?” said the authoress.

“I revere the fair author,” said Edward, “and all her moral and excellent works; but I must say, for a work of fiction, I think it too religious.”

All the company turned their attention from their own frivolous and general conversation, to look at Edward Marsham.—“Well,” said Lady Wringham, “and that remark from a *clergyman*! who’d have thought it?”

“Yes, madam,” said Edward, “I repeat it, if I find a moral and religious work, I ought certainly, according to my profession, to prefer the perusal of it to a modern novel—but a religious book is *one* thing—a modern novel is *another*!”

“Well, la! who *doesn’t* know that?” said Lady Wringham, winking on the company, and laughing aloud; but finding her wit unnoticed, and Lady Isabella (whose depth of understanding and erudition approached to abstruseness), listening to the curate with profound attention, she suffered him to continue.

“Let the writers of the modern novels,” said he, “like the excellent Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, hold up a faithful picture of the times they live in; lash vice, in whatever shape it may appear, and applaud virtue in every-one, while they make their heroes not demi-gods, but mere erring men; and let them, like those incomparable authors, intersperse their works with only those *few* religious sentiments, which may serve to shew the orthodoxy of their own principles, and prove to their readers, that there is no trust to be placed on mere moral rectitude and philosophy, without the aid of Omnipotence: these serious interspersions, if I may be allowed the term, are quite



sufficient for a work which is only meant to unbend and recreate the mind; and make those read who are not fond, naturally, of study; and who, if they find these works too serious, will close the book, not read at all, or else fly to the dangerous rubbish of licentious publications. In devotion's closet let me read the immortal works of a Tillotson, a Sherlock, and a Young; but let not such divine breathings as theirs find their way into a tale composed from fancy, or the fertility of imagination."

"And so then," said Mrs. Kennedy, "you really do not like *Coelebs*."—"Pardon me," said Edward, "I cannot but like it; but I speak only of the proper discrimination which an author ought to make in those kind of works; in regard to the theological part of *Coelebs*, few females are so instructed as to be capable of defining religion so abstrusely as the fair author has done."—"Oh!" interrupted the Rector, "I dare say she was helped by her *good friend*, the Right Reverend the Bish—" "Hush! my good fellow, now do," said Sir Charles Sefton, familiarly laying his hand on Mr. Leslie's mouth, "no scandal, you know I abominate it."—"O dear, yes," said Lady Isabella, "besides, what my brother alludes to," continued she, with a drawling voice, and arch look, "was so *purely platonic*!"

"Well, it is wonderful," said Mrs. Kennedy, "how these *pretty* female authors do get on: now, pray tell me, what is there in Mrs. Fielding's works, the new authoress, who is succeeding so rapidly? She has scarce any education, and has nothing but a fine person, a kind of eloquence and a dashing appearance to recommend her."\*

"Where does the divine creature live?" said Sir Charles, "cannot you introduce me to her?"—"Not I, indeed," said the mortified and much nettled Mrs. Kennedy, who had formerly received from the quizzing Sir Charles a copious dose of flattery, but having thrown out hints to Margaret that he suspected her of witchcraft, he found he must flatter no one but that credulous girl for the remainder of the day, who trembled every time Mrs. Kennedy approached her, for fear she should cast some spell around her.

"When you speak of the influence of the person," said the mischievous Lady Isabella, "I am sure no one is more obliged to nature than my dear little friend Kennedy, who has that irresistible *je ne sais quoi* in her *toute ensemble*, that she captivates as much by her person as by the superior brilliancy of her talents."

"I am not very competent to give my judgement on books," said Charles Marsham, "but I must say, that I think Mrs. Fielding's works, like herself, are charming; and there is many a learned fool who pens his *dry* and *obscure* lines, which no one has patience to read through; while the merit of an author, in my opinion, must be in knowing how to make use of those divine gifts of natural judgement and fine ideas of the soul, which all the logic and learning of the schools can never bestow; but if a woman unites to these great unacquired talents, a fine person, then she is always envied by her own sex, especially by the deformed and ugly." And at the same time he fixed his darting and angry eyes on Mrs. Kennedy.

Charles had one defect in his demeanour, which was, that when provoked, he was apt to be personal: the conversation was getting rather acrid, but was sweetened by the ringing of the last dinner-bell; and each gentleman taking a lady by the hand to conduct her to the dining-parlour, the Rector seized that of Mary, drew her back, that they might be the last of the party, and pressed the hand he held, unseen, with ardour to his lips, before he quitted it, then seated her beside himself at the table: Lady Wringham was

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\**Historique.*

disappointed, tossed her head, and audibly uttered a “well, indeed!—for my part—.” However, the excellent cheer with which the table abounded, soon restored the lady’s good humour, and by the ample credit she did to it, she proved her appetite to be as complaisant at six o’clock as at three. Little Sir John put on his spectacles, and never took his eyes off his plate till he had dispatched all he was helped to.

Edward, doomed to the side of Mrs. Kennedy, supported with her, during the intervals of eating, a pedantic conversation: the lady’s discourse consisted of quotations from Johnson and other learned authors; she enlarged also, in turn, on the rapacity of booksellers, the justness of the Critical Reviewers, and the *Esopian* title of author, seemed literally tacked to her *back*.

Sir Charles Sefton, seated opposite to Lady Isabella, contemplated her beauty with infinite satisfaction, while he poured the soft nonsense into the listening ear of Margaret, which he wished to address to her ladyship. Harrington *looked* all that could express admiration and the soft sentiments of a rising passion, whenever he glanced towards Mary; but the deceived Isabella triumphed over her, and thought that by his unremitting attentions and fine speeches to herself, that *she* was the sole mistress of his affections.

The Rector took but little *public* notice of Mary, but now and then *stole* an amorous whisper, while he gently pressed his knee against her’s: her bashful embarrassment heightened her attractions; and Harrington made a sad digression from the rules of attentive politeness, by not hearing the dashing Lady Caroline challenge him to take a glass of Madeira with her; for totally deaf to her ladyship, he bent forward and requested Miss Marsham to honour him by taking one with him.

Seated on each side of Lady Caroline were Sir Edward Harrington and honest Ralph, while Charles was again in the comfortless situation of being placed by the illiterate Lady Wringham: however, his fair partner on the other side of him, Lady Isabella, made him some amends by her polite attentions, her sprightly *jeu d’ esprits*, and all the fascination of highly polished manners; nor could Charles resist the temptation of her arch wit, but joined with her in silently *quizzing* the *ci-devant* laundress.

The ladies retired soon after dinner to receive the numerous guests who had come from the village of Eglantine and its various environs, for about the compass of ten miles, and bade fair to make up a tolerable set for dancing: the gentlemen in the dining-parlour, though not all dancers, promised very shortly to join the female party at their coffee.

Sir Edward Harrington drew his seat near the worthy Curate, and placing Ralph on the other side of him, he cordially took an hand of each, while he filled his own glass and those of the three brothers, to the health of the Misses Marsham: Frederic, who thought of no other Miss Marsham than Mary, devoutly kissed the glass as he raised it to his lip. “I’ll be shot,” says the Rector, who was now well flushed with wine, “if I do not fill an additional bumper to the health of the eldest Miss Marsham in particular;” and rising, he cried aloud,—“To MARY! huzza!—to MARY! with three cheers!” “Pardon me, sir,” said Frederic Harrington, gravely, “the name of Miss Marsham, though it may excite homage, yet should never be toasted with such bacchanalian applause.” Mr. Leslie, who had that morning borrowed a good round sum of the good-natured Frederic, sat down again, saying, “Well, do as you please; but, by heaven, Marsham, if I was single, your daughter Mary should be your Rector’s wife tomorrow.”

Edward forced a smile, and bowing, said, "You do me too much honour, sir;" and then turning towards Sir Edward Harrington, gave a turn to a conversation which was becoming painful to him, by introducing his favourite subject of politics.

In Sir Edward he found the stanch patriot, blended with the ardent and zealous servant of the throne; keenly alive both to the interests of his country and his sovereign; the strenuous supporter of darling liberty, Britain's peculiar privilege, but one of faction's bitterest and most implacable foes: the tear of philanthropy glistened in the worthy Baronet's eye, as he proposed for a toast—that virtuous senator who had so nobly stepped forward in parliament for the relief of insolvent debtors; had unbarred, through his generous exertions, the doors of their prisons, and restored the long confined husband to the arms of an affectionate wife, and many a father to his afflicted children!

Charles was engaged with the Rector in listening to the most flattering promises of military promotion; the disposition of Charles was sanguine, and he believed all his noble patron uttered. Sir Charles Sefton and Ralph were two to one against Sir John Wringham, in favour of the former being a man of more consequence, and a more useful member of society than the lawyer; whilst the little man contended, that without the protection of the law the farms would soon be destroyed, however wealthy, and the rich property seized on by whoever should choose to lay hands on them, and that, without law, might would be sure to overcome right.

Sir Edward Harrington paid no attention to their arguments, but frequently eyed the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie with contempt, and listened to what he was convinced were the most egregious falsehoods; for the situations which he promised to ensure to Charles, Sir Edward knew had been long given away, and that this the Rector knew also as well as himself. On the proposed toast, however, being repeated, Mr. Leslie said, "Oh! aye, I was so engaged with my worthy veteran here, that I did not attend to you, Sir Edward; here's to your old *quiz* of a virtuous Baronet; and come, now for my toast,—Colonel Wardle!" A general silence prevailed, and an unanimous resolution seemed to be formed not to do honour to the toast, which was first boldly declared by Sir Edward Harrington; Sir Charles Sefton, however, and little Sir John Wringham, drank it; the latter, like a cunning lawyer, saying, that whatever dislike any person might have against another, he ought never to object to such toasts as the master of the house pleased to give. "So, sir," said Sir Edward, "then if it is the master's pleasure, I am to drink, perhaps, success to Napoleon Buonaparte, and also to the *public defender* of a woman of a *certain* description, which defenders are vulgarly called *bullies*: no, gentlemen, I never will toast the man I despise; the leader of any thing bordering on faction, I shall ever hold in the most abject contempt:" and seeing his nephew raise his glass to his lips, he added, "If Frederic drinks that toast, I cast him off for ever!"

"Pardon me, sir," said Frederic, "not even you should make me retract a sentiment which my inward conscience approves and assures me is right; and I solemnly declare, that not even you should *compel* me to drink it; and I pressed the sparkling wine to my lip in veneration of your last sentiment."

"I was in Ireland," said Sir Edward, "a short time ago, and it was proposed at a little town a short distance from Dublin, to vote an address of thanks to Colonel Wardle; an honest clergyman, however, an intelligent, loyal, and well-informed man, was against it; but most votes carried the day, and his arguments were over-ruled. "Well, then," said he,

with all that quickness of ready wit which characterises the Irish nation, "I vote that a piece of the finest and *whitest* Irish linen be sent also as a present to Colonel Wardle, with this pious wish, that "HE MAY NEVER SULLY IT IN THE LAP OF INFAMY!"\*

"Aye, you're all a set of fine fellows," said the Rector, "and so, come, a truce to this nonsense, curse Wardle, hang me if I care one pin for him."

Sir Edward seeing the reverend pillar of the church not very steady, proposed that they should all repair to the drawing-room and join the ladies; but in this he was absolutely over-ruled by the Rector, who insisted on their taking one more bottle, and then they would all adjourn together.

There have been instances of a man drinking himself sober; and one of the kind appeared now exemplified in Mr. Leslie, who after finishing the best part of the insisted bottle, followed the gentlemen up stairs, and partook of the coffee handed round to the ladies with all the elegant ease of a man of fashion; and though his cheek glowed with the fever of a bacchanalian, yet his manners in presence of the ladies, though very gay, were by no means indecorous, or wearing the stamp of inebriety.

A turn in the gardens was carelessly proposed by Lady Caroline Leslie, before the dancing began; and the agreeable surprise of a Vauxhall in miniature met the astonished eyes of the guests: coloured lamps, in appropriate devices, were entwined round the ancient oaks, and that defence of Britain, at the entrance of the park, was guarded by three of the Rector's servants, arrayed in the dress of the ancient Druids! Mary was enchanted with a scene so novel and tasteful, and Margaret now saw realized before her eyes all that she had hitherto been taught to regard as fiction only: "Oh!" said she, as she hung on the arm of the quizzing Sir Charles Sefton, "how often has my *rustic* uncle and *rigid* father declared, that such brilliant sights as these existed only in the poet's imagination, or in the fanciful brain of the writer of a fairy-tale! Surely, those three venerable beings are the genii who preside over this delightful region! and I tread only now on enchanted ground!"

"Your uncle, my intelligent angel," said Sir Charles, "your uncle Ralph is a mere rustic indeed; your uncle Charles is very well; your father I must revere, because it is supposed that he gave being to so divine a creature as yourself: I say, so it is generally *supposed*; but oh! incomparable Margaritta, I could say, what indeed I dare scarcely utter to delicacy like thine! but—surely,—surely,—my seraph, those sublime rays of genius which you possess could never have entered the mind of the daughter of a country curate! impossible, impossible; I own, pardon my temerity, I own I cannot help thinking that the child of some noble or royal dame has been exchanged by some vile nurse for that of the curate, and that Margaritta is that high-born fair-one!"

The company were now strolling about in pairs; and but little attention was paid to our two country girls, except by Margaret's unremitting shadow, Sir Charles Sefton, who had received his instructions from the fair quality idol to whom he was devoted.

Soft music was heard at a distance: Mary, no critical *amateur*, but an untaught enthusiast, was all ear; lost in the sweet reverie which the melodious strains inspired, she suffered herself to be taken by the hand and led towards the place whence the sounds proceeded; she soon became sensible of her situation, and dreaded to turn her head, convinced in her own mind she should behold the libertine Rector, when a voice

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\**Historique.*

addressed her, full of magic sweetness, saying, "Again am I made happy, by guiding Miss Marsham in her wanderings."

"Indeed, sir," replied Mary, "my *wanderings*, as you justly call them, have the appearance of wilful and thoughtless errors: suffer me now, sir, to return to the company, I can easily retrace my way without a guide;" and withdrawing her hand, she turned from him with a grave curtsey; when Frederic, hastily, though respectfully, taking hold of her robe, said, "Oh! Miss Marsham, leave me not thus; I sought you out to explain a conduct to you, which I am obliged this night to preserve, and which gives real anguish to my feelings: I am forbidden to—to pay any attention to you—and requested not to dance with you—by—" "And what, sir," interrupted the half-offended Mary, "could make you imagine that such conduct would be of any consequence to me? The little instruction I have had in dancing, will make me rather desirous of declining it among so polished and scientific a circle; and whoever, sir, chooses to restrict *you*, has, no doubt, justifiable motives; nor can your neglect of me require any apology, as it is a matter of indifference to me." At this last sentence, uttered with an aching heart, she hastily quitted him, and turned down a shadowy walk, which was only partially lighted, to hide her vexation. "It is," thought she, "the proud Sir Edward, his uncle, who has put these restrictions upon him; yet how deceitful are appearances! with how much benevolence, with how much paternal kindness did he look upon me! His smiles bespoke approbation, gentleness, and every thing that was beneficent and amiable, each time he chanced to meet my eyes: oh! world of fashion and deceit, how much I have seen of you, in only the space of a few hours!"

She now heard a mingled tumult of voices, and beheld through the trees the well-dressed crowd moving in various directions; the rockets and fiery serpents whizzed in the air; and as she stopped to gaze at the breaking splendour of the former, she felt herself suddenly clasped round the waist, and embraced with energy and rudeness, by the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie!

With a strength almost supernatural, she pushed him from her, and having disengaged herself from his hold, ran like a frightened fawn along the walk, till she reached a roomy alcove at the farthest end; unknowing where she went, she was hastily about to enter it, when the soft sighs of a female met her ear, mingled with the following words: "Oh! Harrington, you are too dangerous; oh! let us leave this alluring spot; come with me, I intreat you, this instant, to see the fire-works; what will be thought of our absence?"—"Cruel Isabella," returned the inconsiderate Harrington, "think, oh! think only of that ardent *fire* which consumes your Frederic! think of the flame those bewitching eyes have kindled! The mind of my Isabel, rising superior to public opinion, disclaims the world and all its rigid forms."

Shocked, abashed at what she heard, poor Mary knew not how to act; but the pursuing footsteps of the Rector made her resolve to enter the harbour; and oh! thought she, perhaps I shall save the indiscreet Lady Isabella from ruin!

Mary was not one of the fainting kind, but her severe agitation, the conviction of Harrington's being a libertine, the person who laid her arbitrary restraints upon him, now before her, caused an ashy paleness to overspread her countenance: shocked at her death-like appearance, Harrington, in spite of Lady Isabella, flew to her aid; at the same time frantically exclaiming, "For God's sake, Lady Isabella, if you have your *vinaigrette* in your

pocket, give it me to relieve this charming girl; do you see the situation she is in? The explosion of the fire-works, no doubt, has terrified her.”

“Do you think, sir,” said Lady Isabella, “that I wear *pockets*? I leave you, Miss Marsham, in very good hands,” added she, rising, “and will send one of the servants with a glass of water to you, which I dare say will be of more service to a country girl than *aromatic vinegar*!”

Frederic pressed the trembling Mary to his heart; but she, shuddering at his touch, insisted on his leaving her immediately, as she felt quite recovered: he fell on his knees before her, pressed her hand to his lips, and exclaimed, “Oh! how can I ever regain the good opinion of Miss Marsham?”—“*My opinion, sir,*” said Mary, with dignity, “is of very little consequence to any one; and as to your *regaining* mine, I surely, sir, have not known you long enough to form *any* of you; but if you would wish me to think you *obliging*, I desire you will quit me *instantly*, or suffer me to depart: the termination of this walk, I see, leads to another which is crowded with company, and them I shall join, as I see my father and uncles are among them.”

The confused Harrington, not a little mortified, suffered her to depart, and mentally cursed his stars, that had suffered his licentiousness to reach the ear of purity, and had implanted, perhaps, aversion in the breast of that woman (who though only the daughter of a poor country curate) he was most ambitious should think of him favourably.

It has been before remarked, that the bewitching Lady Isabella had made a temporary kind of conquest over the *senses*, and had shaken the *principles* of Frederic Harrington; over his *heart* and *mind* she had no claim. Elevated with champaign, and tied for the whole day and evening at her side, her animation, her beauty, and the opportunities she *carelessly* and almost *purposely* gave him, caused the scene which the pure and spotless Mary had, undesignedly witnessed. The free-thinking Isabella, however, by no means felt obliged at thus being rescued from the destruction of one mad moment; yet though her principles were dissolute, she had refinement in her love, and must possess the heart as well as the person of her lover: her good sense soon shewed her, as conviction flashed on her mind, that the inclination of Harrington towards her, was little more than sensual; the haste in which he quitted her to succour Mary—the scene in the morning—his frequent and animated looks during dinner-time towards Miss Marsham, made her now, as she revolved each circumstance over in her mind, lay plans for a scheme she was determined to put in practice.

The fireworks over, the party were summoned to the ball-room by Lady Caroline: habited as Terpsichore, she tripped with grace and gaiety before her admiring guests, and they entered a spacious saloon, illuminated with wax-lights to a degree of dazzling splendour.

Lady Isabella, entirely mistress of herself, aided as much as possible the reconciliation of Harrington and Mary; but Mary was, at times, either pensive or *distracted*; and not all the soft and delicate attentions of Frederic could reinstate him in her favour: the more he endeavoured to regain it, the more specious and dangerous he appeared to her, and caused her to be the more circumspect. Alas! she little knew the great world, and how often at war with the heart and conscience, is the free indulgence of the senses, from the fatal misfortune of being introduced to that world of dissipation too early: she knew not, that in spite of promiscuous attachments, how deep were the impressions made by

virtue and goodness, though often only at a first interview; she knew not how, actuating on the baser principles and weakness of human nature, refined sophistry and artful fascinations too often succeeded in their aim, without entirely extinguishing the pure flame of moral rectitude.

“I was engaged to dance with you, Frederic,” said Lady Isabella, with the most seducing freedom, and apparent good humour, “but I am a capricious creature; I treat you as one of our family; not for the world would I treat you with rudeness, but I have found an old acquaintance here, whom I promised to dance with at the first ball we should chance to meet at;” at the same moment she gave her hand to a young Major, who was quartered in the village: This young man, of a noble family, but small fortune, had been a great favourite with Lady Isabella, before she saw the all-subduing Harrington; and, till she consented to repair the shattered fortune of her family, by a marriage with Sir Charles Sefton, had been much shunned by all the Leslies; but now he again became a welcome guest at their crowded parties; *en famille*, he was never invited, for fear of Lady Isabella’s former *penchant* returning in the tranquil and interesting conversations of *parties quarrées*, &c. &c.

She formed the ill-natured resolution now, of aiding Harrington’s affections with Mary, raising his expectations to the height of happiness, and then destroying them for ever!

Bewitched by her syren arts, Harrington could not forbear repining at her caprice; and much nettled, said, “I once thought Lady Isabella as *polite* as she is *lovely*! but even to her fancies, she shall ever find me her willing slave,” and bowing obsequiously, he solicited Mary to accept him for a partner.

Mary had ever been fond of dancing, her father and uncles came up to her, enquired the cause of her refusing the honour Mr. Harrington did her? “No,” said Sir Edward, “let me plead for my nephew, for the *honour* will be *his*.” Over-ruled, and not being artful enough to affect indisposition, she suffered herself to be led amongst the gay throng who were just, after having danced “THE SELF,” commencing a second dance. Mary figured not away, with every different *pas à l’Ecossois*, neither did she twist her body about, with all the studied graces of an Italian *figurante*; but the elasticity of her charming form, her own natural elegance, her animation and true ear to every note, gave a kind of skill to her movements, which astonished the scientific dancers, who composed the modern part of the gay assembly.

Margaret did not like dancing, and danced, whenever she attempted it, vilely; but wrought upon by the persuasions of Sir Charles Sefton, to the surprise and vexation of her sister, father and uncles, she stood up; she swam about the room with her head languishing on one side, and put every one out in the figure; for amongst all Margaret’s defects, she had that of never knowing one tune from another; *quick* or *slow*, it was all the same to her: yet Sir Charles, like the fox in the fable, would, had he thought proper, have induced the silly girl, like the vain crow—to sing!

Towards the hour of two, they all adjourned to an elegant supper; and yet Harrington could not (with all his admiration of Mary, and though Lady Isabella gave him every encouragement to notice her,) conquer the pride of birth, and the opinion of the world, sufficiently, to seat himself beside her; notwithstanding, he thought her superior to every female there. His eyes and his willing feet followed Lady Isabella; and his uncle gave him

a rebuke, by taking the hand of the lovely girl his nephew had just quitted, saying aloud, "Will Miss Marsham allow me the honour of waiting on her at supper?"

Lady Isabella accepted all the pointed attentions of Major Raymond, and did not so much as once turn her eyes towards the mortified Frederic: but Lady Caroline said to him, "Harrington, sit by me; here, I will make room for you; I shall not allow you to dance any more, for I just want one to complete my set at *vingt-un*; and must positively lay my commands on you."—"The *commands* of your ladyship are to me *laws*, which I am happy to obey," said Harrington, with forced politeness; and attending her after the supper was over, to the card-table, left the remainder of the company to re-commence their dancing.

Mary danced no more, but was gratified by the pleasing attention of Sir Edward Harrington, with whom she supported a sensible and interesting conversation; and the Baronet felt for Mary all the tender warmth of paternal friendship.

Just after the clock had struck four, a violent bustle was heard in the card-room: Lady Caroline was in violent hysterics; Harrington, pale, and in evident distress of mind, supported her in his arms: some of the party appeared to sneer, and one lady seemed, in a determined manner, to insist on payment.

With this lady, a female gambler of quality, who had come down to her country seat, a few miles off, and had this evening accepted the invitation of the Leslies, Harrington had imprudently entered into a gallant kind of partnership at the *vingt-un* table, and Lady Caroline, in the true spirit of play, had delighted in laying enormous bets of beating two against one: at length she had gambled away infinitely more than she was able to pay; Harrington would willingly have excused her all, but the partnership he had entered into, besides the little money he had left, from the preposterous loan he had made in the morning, rendered it impracticable.

The Reverend Mr. Leslie, however, with the aid of the indignant Sir Edward Harrington, restored a momentary comfort to the mind of her ladyship; but the look Sir Edward gave his nephew, seemed to pierce him to the heart, while that of Mr. Leslie, to his wife, was no less replete with wrath; but for that she cared but little.

The festivity of the scene being now much clouded, and the morning sun having shot its bright rays on both natural and artificial beauty, Lady Caroline retired, and each party seemed desirous of departing.

Harrington was missing at the same time as her ladyship; and Mary, who was doomed to be a spectator of all that could agonize her feelings, beheld, as she passed through a suite of rooms to fetch her shawl from the apartment in which she had left it, from a door which stood half open, Harrington on his knees before Lady Caroline Leslie!

He was pressing her extended hand to his bosom, and these words distinctly met her ear, as Lady Caroline bent towards him, "Oh! too persuasive Harrington, you have conquered!"

Mary had heard enough, not only to be convinced of the licentiousness, but the baseness of Frederic's principles; she saw but too plain, that he was now ungenerous enough to take advantage of the pecuniary distresses of the wife and the friend who were hospitably entertaining him under their roof: she hastened from a scene so painful, and joining her father and his brothers, took the arm of her uncle Charles, while the transported and exulting Margaret was accompanied home by Sir Charles Sefton.



## CHAP. VI.

THE FLYING TEA-KETTLE, AND OTHER  
MIRACULOUS INCIDENTS.

—————In airy vision rapt,  
She stray'd, regardless whither.

THOMSON.

THE ardent sun of a bright summer's morning had arisen with more than common warmth, and the over-joyed birds were loudly tuning their morning carols, when a rude and violent tumult completely drowned not only their melodious notes, but also the soft and amorous whisperings of Sir Charles Sefton.

Presently whirled aloft over their heads, a large black tea-kettle; and Sir Charles, though almost ready to expire with his suppressed inclination to laugh, uttered, as he clasped the terrified Margaret to his breast, "Heaven defend us from the incantations of that witch!"

"Good God, sir," replied Margaret, "has Mrs. Kennedy then followed us? I left her at the bottom of the stairs which led to her chamber, and she wished me a good-night, as she told me a violent head-ach had obliged her to take '*French leave*,' I think she called it, 'of the company.'"

"Art, art, my dear girl," said Sir Charles, "be assured, from me, who will never deceive you, she is no better than a witch; and I will one day convince you of it. What could cause an inanimate tea-kettle to fly about in the air like a bird, except witchcraft and art magic?"

They now walked on a brisk pace before the rest of the party; and Mr. Marsham stayed behind, to enquire at the cottage, on the other side of the lane they had just passed through, and from whence the wrangling noise had proceeded, the cause of this early disturbance! He there found a stout peasant in a violent rage with his wife, for not only drinking her confounded *outlandish slop* herself, but also making her children as fond of it as she was: and that his eldest lads, who were old enough to be fellow-labourers with himself, he could never get out to work of a morning, till forsooth, they had *gotten* their tea! He had sworn the night before, and religiously had he kept his word, that if ever he found the great *tea-kettle* on in the morning, except, *mayhap* on a Sunday, he would throw it headlong to the d——l; and when he came from the field, at half-past six o'clock, where he had been anxiously waiting the arrival of his boys, he found his wife in the act of putting it on the fire, and his eldest son with the bellows in his hand preparing to make it boil.

He snatched it off with a torrent of abuse, unmindful of his wife's and children's intreaties, and threw it with such violence, that it seemingly took a *flight* in the air for some distance, before it gravitated to the earth. Fortunately the water was cold, otherwise our party from the ball might have been much endangered by the scalding shower.

Sir Charles refused to enter Eglantine farm-house, but gave a deep sigh when he parted from Margaret; while the first object she encountered was Phelim O'Gurphy, who

came by order of the servant-maid, to ask them if they would not *be after taking* a dish of coffee? “Or, mayhap,” said he, in a half whisper to the young ladies, “you would both like better a *raking pot of tea*\*?”

Margaret not attending to his words, only hung down her head, and *endeavoured* to blush at the consciousness of her infidelity towards this *young nobleman*; for Sir Charles, *really* noble, as far as birth and title made him so, had supplanted this *ideal* son of greatness in the place he had heretofore held in her heart.

Mary thought Phelim meant by raking tea, only what was uncommonly strong; and taking Margaret by the arm, thanked him, as she refused it, and accompanied her sister to their chamber.

And now it was Mary’s turn to be most wakeful; in vain she darkened the room, in vain she drew the curtains as close as possible; in spite of all her self-reproaches, or all the remonstrances of prudence, the figure of Frederic Harrington swam before her fancy, occupied all her thoughts, and the certain conviction of being so deceived in the opinion she had first formed of him, brought the vainly repress tear to her waking eyes.

Margaret, elated and happy, certain in her own mind that she was now becoming a heroine of high renown, that not only Phelim O’Gurphy, but also a valiant knight wore her chains, that all Romance was real, and that great adventures awaited her, soon sunk into a profound repose, from which she did not awake till two in the afternoon.

Mary had long left her pillow, and opening the curtain just as Margaret awoke, she said, “Indeed, my dear girl, I believe you were born for the scenes of high life; never did I see you in such spirits as you were in yesterday; and never did I know you sleep so sound.”

Margaret caught her hand, and looked earnestly in her face. “Good heavens,” thought she to herself, “conviction has flashed on the mind of my sister! But I will be silent at present, Sir Charles requested me to be so, and says he has his reasons. “What is the hour, Mary?” said she;—“Past two, my love,” said her amiable sister, “and I have a nice breakfast prepared for you, which I would not touch till you rose, and which only we shall take together, for my father and uncles have had theirs; they are now gone out to take a walk to refresh themselves, and have kindly ordered the servants not to have our dinner ready till five, as uncle Ralph says, for this late scene of pleasure we must lose two days. My dear father said, ‘Ah! my child, how *many* days are lost by the great and affluent, in the pursuit of what they falsely call pleasure!’”

Margaret hastily dressed herself, and as they took their breakfast, said, “We have an holiday to-day, and I shall devote it—” “To reading, I know,” interrupted her sister. “Now you happen, Mary, to be mistaken; but I shall not tell any one how I mean to pass this day.” For Margaret had become very circumspect and reserved in all her words and actions, having so often exposed herself to the ridicule of the servants, the reproofs of her father, and the laughter of her uncles and sister for her absurdities.

“As you please,” said Mary, “I shall sit up stairs and finish the little cap, which I call my holiday work, for poor Betty Harwood’s seventh child, with which she is now pregnant.”—“Very well,” says Margaret, “then, my dear Mary, we shall not disturb each

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\* Those who have visited the several parts of Ireland where all old customs are preserved, will know the meaning of Phelim, by a *raking pot of tea*! otherwise we refer our readers for an explanation, to Miss Edgeworth’s excellent novel of CASTLE RACK-RENT.

other; first I shall go to the little cottages on the right, and then, full of "*conscious rectitude*," I shall devote the rest of the day to that purpose for which I have long wished."

"Will you pardon me, my love, if I say one thing to you," said Mary, "on the subject of your visits to the cottages?" Margaret, who was all good-humour, replied, "Any thing you please, my dear Mary, for I am sure you do not mean to offend."

"Well then, I must say, my dear, that though all benevolence is amiable, and that it is better to relieve *twenty* we may think imposters, than accidentally pass over *one* found among them who may be really a worthy object, yet I think you are too indiscriminate in your charities: the woman, to whom you are so lavish of what little money you are allowed, who lives in the cottage with the broken window, we know is both idle and given to drinking; and her window still remains broken, though my uncle Ralph and Charles have, each of them, given her money more than once to have it mended: then how many gowns have I given her, both of my own and some that were my mother's! she only sells them to buy liquor, and is always the same dirty ragged figure; therefore, I now never give her any thing, for kindness to such an individual is only thrown away. But you still continue her patroness, and she flatters you by saying, that you are the only worthy member of the family; and do you see, with all that is given to her, though she has only herself to provide for, that she is a bit cleaner or better looking; while poor Betty Harwood, with her six children, is, as well as them, always cheerful, always clean and industrious: to do any thing for her, is a real charity."

"Aye, very well," said Margaret, "I do not like Betty Harwood, she often presumes to give me advice, and tells me to rise early of a morning, and not read so much; oh! she has such a common mind, I cannot endure her: while my poor woman has had a very tolerable education, and she can talk upon some novels she has read, with as much judgement (I could almost say) as *myself*!"

After this self-applauding sally, Margaret rose, and repaired to the cottages, where she gossiped with the slatternly object of her beneficence till it was near the hour of five; and hearing, on her return home, that her father and uncles were going the next day to dine with a party of gentlemen and farmers, she delayed the important business she had in contemplation till the morrow, when she should be free from interruption.

Situated at about forty miles distance from London, in the county of Essex, stood Eglantine farm-house, the property of Mr. Ralph Marsham: the mansion was a very ancient edifice, was lofty, spacious, and consisted of a great variety of apartments; some of the large ones on the upper story had been chiefly appropriated to store-rooms for oats, straw, and the winter fruits of walnuts, apples, pears, &c. &c.

In the summer, when the stores were exhausted, the keys were generally left in the doors of these rooms till they were again replenished.

What the farm-house had been formerly, was a matter of doubt; some thought it had been one of the palaces belonging to one or other of those kings who reigned after the conquest; while others, with more probability, believed it to have been, for many generations, a large inn: it came into the family of the Marshams by being purchased by the grandfather of the present three brothers.

In several rooms there were, however, strong *marks of antiquity*; and in many places it was *proved*, in spite of the strength of the building, by their frequent want of repairs. In

two or three of the apartments, were rudely-carved and clumsy figures of shields, in a kind of *basso-relievo* on the painted wainscoat; and over several of the chimney-pieces were arched niches, in which were crosses, old Romish bishops with their crosiers;—friars, some headless, some armless, with mutilated rosaries.

Margaret was sure her uncle's dwelling had been a formidable castle, and that it was also haunted; for, one night, some friends having arrived from London, she was obliged to give up the chamber in which her sister and herself reposed, and sleep in one directly under one of the store-rooms; from whence she heard noises resembling the galloping of horses without shoes, accompanied with dreadful moanings; which proceeded from no other cause than what is very common in such old houses, which was an army of rats, who had encamped there, and were scampering over her head, and essaying to escape from a terrier which Mr. Marsham kept for the sole purpose of destroying such hostile enemies to his grain and fruit: while the moans she heard were from a cat, who having found her way thither, was swearing at the terrier, to prevent his approaching her.

But Margaret was fully convinced that the noises she heard proceeded from the perturbed spirit of some one on whom some fatal deed had been perpetrated; perhaps the spirit of some of her noble and warlike ancestors stalked about to "render night hideous:" and as she always read of her favourite heroines despising fear, and investigating minutely all that bore the appearance of mystery, she resolved, some day, when her father and uncles would not be likely to interrupt her, she would begin her search, and address the immaterial and awful being.

Perhaps, too, even if the spirit should not reveal itself to her, she yet might be able to find, in some hitherto concealed recess, the papers which contained the elucidation of her birth, when the confessions of her guilty nurse, and all the direful scene of her iniquity would be proclaimed to the astonished inhabitants of the farm-house.

As the brothers had some miles to go, they departed early; and Mary and Margaret had the whole day before them: they had not sat long together before they received an invitation from a kind neighbour, to pass the day with them, as Messrs. Marshams had called, and said they were alone. This invitation Margaret positively refused to accept; but at the same time, strenuously urged her sister to go. Mary, who knew that Margaret's chief delight was to sit alone for hours, poring over a romance, feared this was now the cause of her refusing to accompany her; she entreated her to go with her, with all the persuasion she was mistress of, adding, that she could not possibly think of going without her.

Margaret, however, told her, if possible, she would follow time enough for dinner; but desired her sister to tell their friends not to wait a moment, for she would be sure to be there very early in the afternoon; and Mary finding all she could say useless to her obstinate sister, hastened to the dwelling of her friend, Miss Ringwood.

Lucy Ringwood and Mary Marsham might justly be styled congenial souls: in person, Lucy was more pleasing than pretty, yet there was something about her so irresistible, that she was perpetually making conquests; though, with all her mind's perfections, there was such an *etourderie* about her, that she never long retained the hearts of her numerous captives.

She had been left an orphan early, and was now the darling *protégée* of a rich maiden aunt, her mother's only sister; who, though a spinster of sixty, was free from every

caprice and narrowness of idea so often, not to say, sometimes *unjustly*, imputed to that proscribed class of ladies.

Mrs. Susanna Bradbury laughed with all the hearty glee of seventeen, and enjoyed a free jest, and a neat pointed philippic, against prudery, with a pleased vivacity, devoid of all envy, and replete with admiration of the witty person's talents who might have composed it. Her conversation was free and unrestrained, full of good sense and cheerfulness, and she loved and admired the young and handsome. Yet in her figure, the quizzing buck has set her down, the moment he beheld her, as a fair object for sport; but Mrs. Susan has soon made him repent the onset, by the keenness and brilliancy of her repartees, which, though free from all ill-natured severity, have been so full of point, that he has wished he had let her alone.

Her company and conversation were ever considered a treat by the young, the lively, and sensible: she had a fine and retentive memory, a well cultivated understanding, a fund of anecdote and ready wit, and with those select friends, where she knew she was safe, she shewed herself a most excellent mimic.

Her form was tall and spare; her face had been very pretty, and still bore the visible remains of its powers of pleasing; her grey locks, which she took no pains to conceal or disguise, peeped from beneath her fine black laced hood; her long taper waist, pointed before with a diamond stay-hook, her stiff rich silk gown and quilted satin petticoat, under a clear starched apron, and her paste shoe-buckles, in her satin shoes, truly characterised an old maid in the very beginning of the last century.

She loved Mary with the same affection she did her Lucy, and a more happy or more merry trio never sat down to dinner than they, on this eventful day.

Yes, the day was *eventful* to the heroine, Margaret: in order that nothing should hinder her in the execution of the important task she had set herself, she dressed herself in readiness to go out in the evening, before she began her investigations.

She knew Mrs. Susanna Bradbury loved neatness; she therefore arrayed herself in clean and fine white muslin: she had very indifferent hair, of a dull and dirtyish light brown colour. Having been too sleepy to curl it the night before, it hung about in a stringy kind of disorder over her face, and she injudiciously put over it, in that state, a wreath of white roses. Thus equipped, with a deep sigh, she began to ascend the old worm-eaten staircase, which led to the upper store-rooms. Whoever has seen the stairs at the Castle Inn, at Kingston, may form an idea of the numerous, short-ascending and broken steps which Margaret now went up; and large balls of wood, similar to what we see at the above-mentioned inn, were likewise placed as ornaments on the balustrades of Mr. Marsham's staircase; these she regarded a few moments, convinced they must have been the helmets worn by some of her warlike ancestors; and she then, with a reflection on the years and ages that had passed since those brave heroes had mingled with their native dust, proceeded onwards.

She entered the apple-chamber, where a few half-rotten solitary apples were yet lying on the straw. "Such," said she aloud, "such are the uses now, oh! palace of my ancestors, to which thy lofty apartments are assigned!"—"Anan!" said a voice which seemed to come from beneath; Margaret started:—"Oh!" cried she, "as my beloved Shakespear says,

"Oh! speak, perturbed spirit!"

“Anan!” again returned the voice: “Ah! say, speak,” said the agitated Margaret, “was then the name, revered dame, which you bore while on earth, *Anannia*?”

“Why what is’t thee be doing there?” said the rude voice of one of the labourers, as he ascended a few steps of a staircase which led to the back-kitchen; “why, as true as I’m a living soul, if here be’n’t our Miss Peggy, as clean as a *broide*, up i’th’ apple-loft! Why *laws*, miss, there ben’t one there as is fit for a christian to eat.”

Margaret retreated—“Oh! one of these vile plebeians belonging to my uncle,” thought she, “has prevented me from learning the hard and perhaps horrible fate of the beautiful Lady *Anannia*! but I must use stratagem to develop the mysteries which surround me.”

“Thomas,” said she, in a soft voice, “I do not want any apples, I am only come here to kill a little time!”—“Why, miss,” replied Thomas, “if you wants, as how, to be *culling thyme*, there be none up there, but there be a power of it in the garden, tho’f to be sure, ’tis now in flower; so if you will be pleased to come down here a few steps, I’ll shew you the room where un puts the dried *yerbes*.”

Though Margaret saw how much he had misinterpreted her words, yet she thought, as the apple-chamber was so full of adventure, that the herb-closet might have also its share of the marvellous, and she followed the man with trembling feet and a pallid cheek.

“Laws! miss, why you be’n’t frightened, be you?” said he, looking at her. “Oh! no,” said she, squatting down on a bundle of dried sage, “but I wish to be left alone: go.”—“Oh! yes, miss, I must go, for I’ve got a main deal to do; but mind me miss, when you’s done, you’d better go back the way you com’d: you’d better not attempt to set foot on that there little bit of a staircase; for d’ye see, its so mortal *auld*, that a body might break un’s neck if un were to attempt to go down it.” Margaret waved her hand, impatient for his departure, being fully resolved, after such a prohibition, at all events to descend the ruined flight of stairs.

She stepped down several without danger, for her frame and footsteps were light, but to the left she beheld a broken door with a rusty iron bolt, half dropping from the staple: breathless with the ideas of adventure and romantic peril, heated with the phantoms of her imagination, she sprang forward and tore her hand with the shattered remains of the bolt.

The door, which hung but by one hinge, she could only open by so small a degree, that she found she could not obtain an entrance; but a cursory peep at the green damp of the walls, made her resolve, even if it should be with the hazard of her life, to gain admittance: in her efforts to squeeze herself through, she rent her new and best plain muslin gown from the top to the bottom, and dreadfully scratched her arms and face against the broken and rusty iron work of the decayed door: but having, at length, accomplished her purpose, she found herself in a small dark-looking room, which could not, from its appearance, have been inhabited or made use of for a considerable length of time: every rotten board shook under her feet, and imparted the fearful idea, that it would soon precipitate her into some hideous cavern: she heard the most piercing shrieks, and sometimes a sound of mingled voices; presently the shrieks were hushed, and she was certain that she distinguished the voice of her Phelim.

“Alas! alas,” thought she, “dear and constant youth, I am unworthy of thy affections; but oh! what can have brought thee to this remote spot but the intuitive power of almighty

love? Oh! if thou art in danger from the spells of magic, or the influence of evil spirits, thy Margaritta will, by one great and heroic effort of sublime virtue, cast her present noble lover from her too susceptible heart, and fly to succour thee, or share all *thy* perils, as I am assured thou wouldst *mine*. But where can I fly?" thought she, as she again essayed to open the door somewhat wider, in order to effect her exit from this ruinous apartment.

She now exerted the utmost powers of her strength, and by one great effort, the other broken and rust-worn hinge came off the door, and down fell its remains on the poor terrified Margaret, whose weight, with that of the door together, was too much for the fragile boards, and the heroine of romance was precipitated into a noisome and offensive dungeon. A squeaking noise assailed her ears, and she felt herself seized by the remnants of her gown by some terrific kind of being, who appeared, to her bewildered senses, to utter something like a stifled groan: in her endeavours to disengage herself, she trod on something soft, and apparently alive, when a feeble shriek met her ear, and a violent hubbub of shrieking and groaning, or rather *squeaking* and *grunting*; for Margaret had fallen into a dark sty, where lay a sow and her litter of pigs: but that *she* did not yet discover, and dreading to remain an instant where she was, her fears made her desperate, and perceiving a ray of light from a chink in the boards, which surrounded the enraged grunter's dwelling, she forcibly applied her hand to it; when Phelim, in a neighbouring barn, hearing the knocking, undid the wooden fastening on the outside, and discovered his young mistress in a condition which rendered her hardly cognisable.

"Oh! my brave, my generous deliverer!" said she, as she sprang towards him.—"Why how in the name of St. Patrick, came you here, miss?" said he, "and och, as sure as I'm my own mother's son, if you have not killed the *titman peg*! poor little bit of a beast, how it lies there, with not a bit of breath in its body!"

"Oh! God forbid!" cried Margaret, who did not want tenderness or good-nature, "I hope not; do, Phelim, try to recover it."—"Och come, the little beast is not quite cold; I'll put it to its own mother—make yourself *aisy*, miss, these things cannot be helped."

"Oh! Phelim," said Margaret, "what have I not gone through this afternoon!"

"By J—s, miss, I think you *came through* the old loft overhead; and how the d—— did you find your way there?"

"By descending the mysterious and prohibited staircase," replied Margaret.

"Oh! by my soul, and I don't know where that is; it has a *rum* kind of name, however!"

"I will tell you all another time," said Margaret: "but how can I ever reward you for your bravery in unbarring the door of my dungeon!"

"As for that, miss, I see no great bravery in opening the door of a pig-stye; I thought the sow had been in her tantrums, and I looked to see what was the matter."

"Your delicacy, generous youth," said she, "makes light of this matter: oh! that I had but some valuable ring or scarf to bestow!"

Phelim, who now found her, as she often was to his limited capacity, wholly unintelligible, said to her, "But sure, miss, you're in a *broth of a pickle*, and if you'd take my advice, you'll just step into the barn, and be after wiping off the mud with a clean wisp of straw."

Margaret took the advice of O'Gurphy, but turning to go into the barn, she perceived, at a little distance, a pool of a very sanguinary appearance, she started and screamed aloud, "Ah! I knew foul murder had been committed!"

"Why yes, miss," said Phelim, grinning, "they have indeed been *committing* what you call *murder*!"

"And you laugh, Phelim, and speak of it as if it was no crime to perpetrate so dreadful an act!"

"Holy St. Patrick! why you don't think such kind of *murder* can be any sin, do you?"

"What," said Margaret, "did they kill the holy St. Patrick?"

"Och! and I would be glad to know the Irish boys that would have dared to have done that! but, miss, it was as fine a *young peg* as ever sucked, that was *kilt* a little while ago; and the master means to have it roasted on Sunday: it squeaked like any young devil, but I dispatched it as soon as I could, for I hate to see the poor little *lumps of animals* tortured."

Margaret now finding herself in her uncle's barn-yard, and somewhat ashamed of her misconceptions, entered the barn, and said to Phelim, "Now, while I wipe off some of this mud, do go and see if the poor little pig I hurt, is alive! If it is, I shall go to rest happy."

"Och! and I believe it's as dead as *Julus Caesar*, or *Judas Caret*," said the Hibernian; "but I'll go and see, to *plase* you, miss."

"Oh!" thought she, when she was alone, "how, in spite of his ignoble disguise, does his learning and native dignity discover itself! In common discourse he gives as a comparison the great Julius Caesar, even when speaking of the death of a little pig; and I wonder who he meant by *Judas Caret*? no doubt one of his own high and noble ancestors."

To the great joy, however, of Margaret, Phelim returned with the glad tidings that the poor little *crater* was likely to live; and she now hastened to her chamber, to see if she could arrange her figure in any kind of way, time enough to keep her promised engagement at Mrs. Susanna Bradbury's cottage.

How shocked was the poor girl when she contemplated her figure in the glass! The bruises under her eyes portended a rueful blackness, her wreath of roses were full of cobwebs, her gown torn to tatters, and covered with the dirt of the pig-stye; her arms, neck, and hands, made hideous by innumerable scratches, while the pains in her bruised limbs made her feel, that instead of going out she must absolutely go to bed.

Thus ended this day's adventures of Margaret; pleasing to her, in vision; cruelly mortifying in reality: she dispatched a message to Mrs. Susan, that not being very well, she hoped that lady would excuse her for breaking her promise. They all thought her indisposition was only one of her nervous head-achs, from intense application to her favourite studies; and while they spoke of the ill-effects of such constant reading, on the mind and health of a young creature, and thinking it was no other cause which kept her away, Mary continued to enjoy, with these, her true friends, the cheerful and unrestrained hours till ten o'clock, when Mrs. Susan's servant saw her safe home.

Mrs. Susanna Bradbury loved both the sisters; she loved them for the sake of their worthy father and uncles, and she often conversed with Edward on the romantic propensity of his youngest daughter; but perfectly agreed with that sensible man, that, to entirely prohibit those kind of books (the morals of which, however absurd their incidents and events, were unexceptionable) would be only to teach the gaining them by stealth;



and then, works of a more dangerous tendency might corrupt the heart and undermine the principles of his girl: while the works she now perused, only ensnared the imagination for a time; and as her years increased, he hoped she would be able to see the folly of giving credit to them, and only draw from them those sentiments and feelings which they were intended by their authors to inspire;—an admiration of their ingenuity, and the grandeur and sublimity of their language; with an abhorrence of vice, and a sincere love and veneration for virtue.

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## CHAP. VII.

## FOOD FOR SCANDAL.

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,  
Thou wilt not escape calumny.

SHAKESPEARE.

————— Shall one doubtful act,  
Arraign a life of innocence unblam'd?

DODSLEY'S CLEONE.

IT may be a matter of surprise, that a lady of respectable connexions and good fortune, as was Mrs. Susanna Bradbury, was not invited with her niece to the ball given by the Leslies; especially as there was formerly a friendship of the *visiting kind* between them; and the noble Rector had also once highly admired Miss Lucy Ringwood: the independent Mrs. Susanna was herself the only cause of this neglect.

An elegant little villa had been purchased by a gentleman, a foreigner from Switzerland: himself, an English lady, whom he introduced as his *adopted daughter*, and three servants, composed his family, besides the lady's pet birds, dog and cats. The gentleman was between seventy and eighty years of age; his snowy locks waved over his fine high forehead, and candour and benevolence were seated on his brow: the lady, who took the charge of his household affairs, was past the bloom of life, but yet many, very many years younger than himself.

Purity, virtue, and philanthropy, form the basis of the Swiss character; and if ever *one* country can lay a peculiar claim to those noble principles,—it is Switzerland! Her sons, all mind, and not the slaves of sense, can enjoy the chaste platonic intercourse with a different sex which the voluptuous Englishman sneers at, and knows not how to estimate.

The respectable Mr. Rouveau was eminent for possessing the virtues we have cited; how oft has he denied himself the luxuries of life, to impart its comforts to others! How conscious in the rectitude of his own heart and mind, has he gloried in seeing the friend he protected, excite admiration by the superiority of her talents and the charms of her person: nor had he an idea that one impure thought could enter any bosom on his and her account: he knew too well how to render his age respectable; neither did he care for a world narrow in its ideas, however enlightened, and of which he was totally independent: the poor, the indigent, never assailed his hospitable gate in vain, nor left it unrelieved.

Such were the uses this excellent man made of his large fortune: he owed no man any thing; while many owed to him all the comforts of life they enjoyed, and which, before they knew *him*, seemed fled from them for ever! The titled, the rich, were seldom invited to partake of his plentiful dinners; no, his parlour-table was continually open to the worthy gentleman of small fortune, the widow with a very limited jointure, the industrious genteel-bred wife, whose husband, perhaps, languished in a prison for debt; while his kitchen was filled every Sunday by large families of fatherless children and their widowed mothers, whom he knew were real objects of charity. But the noble and warm

heart of this beneficent man had keenly felt the arrows of ingratitude; yet they could never pierce deep enough to stop the continual flow of his benevolence: Oh! *active christianity*, it is thou, and thou alone that *can* hope for the favour of approving heaven!

Mrs. Edmonds, the female friend of this worthy man, grateful, contented, and happy, was proud of the friendship and favour of a mind like his, and which friendship had increased in numberless acts of kindness, during a period of three and twenty years, since the commencement of which term she had been the widow of an officer, and was left with only her pension for her support.

Mr. Rouveau had long known her family; had known *her* from the earliest period of infancy; and his doors and heart were open to receive the distressed and pretty young widow: the idea never entered his pure mind, that there could be any thing amiss in granting an honourable and safe asylum to the daughter of an old friend, because she happened to be a *female*; and because she was in the flower of youth, and her countenance lively and charming, he did not see why *that* should be a reason that she was to be debarred the fatherly care and protection which *he* could afford her!

She had always revered his character, and almost loved him as a parent; and in the heyday of youth and giddy innocence, she exultingly told her friends how happily situated she was going to be! The young fellows laughed, and said, "Aye, aye, let alone these old gentlemen; they are connoisseurs in the sex." While her female acquaintance screwed up their mouths, and looked meaningly on each other: next time she called on them they were not at home; and, for a few years she had not many visitors, except of the opposite sex: the correctness, however, of her conduct, her talents, her skill in music, her fine voice, and a more powerful motive still, Mr. Rouveau's *fine fortune*, gained them many and highly respectable friends of *both* sexes. Mrs. Edmonds had only been *comparatively* happy before,—she was now *completely* so; for her heart was formed for friendship, and she loved society, because she found she always pleased in it: the more her newly acquired friends conversed with her, the more they saw in her to admire, and checked themselves for ever associating the idea of *mistress* with that of Mr. Rouveau's *adopted daughter*.

Change of air being requisite to preserve

"The green old age unconscious of decays,"

of Mr. Rouveau, and the lease of his house in town being expired, he purchased a villa at Eglantine, intending to make a long summer there, and devote only two or three of the winter months to London, in ready-furnished lodgings.

Mrs. Susanna Bradbury, who had in her early years been acquainted with the mother of Mrs. Edmonds, immediately paid her respects to her after her appearance at church: these two liberal-minded women were charmed with each other: Mrs. Susan, who could listen for hours to vocal music, and weep at those fine airs, which the sweet voice of Mrs. Edmonds knew how to sing to the heart, was most happy in those delighted hours she could pass with so captivating a companion, who, instead of setting an improper example, was the gentle and prudent monitor, to correct and kindly admonish the giddiness of her Lucy's youth.

The Rector, from his pulpit, admired the fine black eyes of Mrs. Edmonds, who looked at him from attentive devotion only: but it was impossible, he said, for *his* family to *visit* her! Lady Caroline, who but a few weeks before had aided her sister in an elopement, declared, if ever she happened to fall into company with her, she should certainly quit it *instantly!* and fearful such an event *might* take place, she must beg Mr. Leslie entirely to give up the acquaintance of the Bradburys; which imparted not the least pain to the mind of Mrs. Susan; who never went to church (so much did she abhor to see a man's example eternally at war with his precepts) except when the worthy Edward Marsham performed the religious duty; for though she had formerly been of the Rector's parties, she detested the free principles of his family; and lamented, that with such fine sense, such a lovely person and enlarged ideas, Lady Isabella should glory in infidelity, and be the victim to her false and dangerous opinions. While she knew, also, that Lady Caroline, with all her pretended correctness, clasped to her bosom the divorced wife, and the well-known adulteress, if they chanced to be gifted with title and fortune.

Lady Isabella, who sat the world at defiance, when *she* has been riding or walking with all her sister's high and fashionable party, has stopped at the window, as she passed by the villa, to chat with Mrs. Edmonds, or stop her horse, and condescendingly talk to her over the garden-wall; but this she did, not from any admiration or certainty of the lady's virtue, on the contrary, she told every one, she really believed her to be the *mistress* of Mr. Rouveau; but what of that? if she *chose* to notice her, she *would*: every one had a right to do as they pleased; for *her* part, she found her an agreeable, sensible woman: she certainly, as her brother did not approve of it, would not bring her to his house; consequently she could not call herself at the villa; but as far as *private* notice went, she would not, like Caroline, turn up her nose, and toss away her head, whenever she met her by chance."

A suspicion shot across the mind of Sir Edward Harrington, that she really *was* the daughter of Mr. Rouveau, and he fancied he could discover a likeness between them.

Where not even the severest censor could find any thing bordering on incorrectness, he thought it a cruel deprivation to society, that it should be debarred from those whose talents and merits give to it its brightest ornaments: and while he was charmed with the conversation of this polished and virtuous pair, he longed to introduce Mrs. Edmonds among the circle of his *friends*; not that he could call the Leslies by that sacred name; but he knew the influence they held in the country; and that, where they declared off, few other families of wealth and respectability would choose publicly to visit.

Willingly would these courtly *friends* have delighted in the opulent Mr. Rouveau's company; but he never associated with those who excluded his *protégée*.

Sir Edward hinted one evening, to the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie, his suspicions of a very near relationship between Mr. Rouveau and Mrs. Edmonds. "My good fellow," said the Rector, "why then does he not come forward, and own it? Then we would visit her directly! but, upon my soul, it is impossible that I can introduce to Lady Caroline any woman of *equivocal character!*" Yes,—such is the common-place jargon of impure nobility!—All correct attention to *etiquette* is right—but when it sits on the lip of the libertine; when the immodest and licentious dame of quality pretends to shrink with horror, from a female who perhaps never knew but one virtuous and constant attachment, decorum laughs, and virtue scoffs at the prudish grimace. It is only the few among the

rich and noble, that should dare to be thus precisely correct, who are themselves patterns of purity; but amongst those we find such an outrageous show of virtue least displayed.

A smile of indignation overspread the countenance of Sir Edward, as he looked on Lady Caroline, who had just folded up two letters which she had been writing; one to her worthless sister, who had absconded from her husband, and the other to a near relation she had in parliament, to know if he could not make a proposal, the next sessions, for a tax to be laid on the men who carried milk about, in the different parishes, and have it made an emolument to the different livings in town, being made payable to the clergyman of each respective rectory: this tax, if it *could* be levied, Mr. Leslie had promised to allow her, to fill her card-purse.\*

These two *virtuous* letters she had read aloud, *pro bono publico*. However, Sir Edward resumed his subject.

“There may be family reasons,” said he, “why Mr. Rouveau may not choose to own his relationship to Mrs. Edmonds; I understand he has children by his late wife, whose jealousy might be excited by such a disclosure: at present, they all love and respect her.”

“Only a proof,” said Lady Isabella, who just laid down her netting, “of their liberality of sentiment: why, surely, if my father chose to keep a mistress, do you think I would not countenance her? Aye, and I could love her too, if she was worthy.”

“Or if my husband,” said Lady Caroline, “had *twenty* illegitimate children, by as many different women, do you think he would not own them, sooner than they should be excluded from every high and respectable circle, which they would be entitled to shine amongst, as his *acknowledged* offspring? But of course, if we countenance the children, we cannot the mothers. Let Mr. Rouveau marry this *accomplished creature*, and then we can all visit her, after she has been properly *brought out*!”

Sir Edward bowed and was silent, yet could not help secretly remarking, how very liberal each of the ladies had shewn themselves, except—where *true* liberality was required!

But the real truth was, that Mr. Rouveau, our amiable Swiss, had been very unhappy in an early marriage, and had solemnly vowed when he was again at liberty, never to enter the state again: and, even had he been so inclined, he had too much real wisdom and prudence than to unite himself to a woman whom he regarded only as a child, when compared to himself.

Mr. Rouveau and Mrs. Edmonds spoke, *en passant*, to the Marshams; they had not yet visited; for Ralph, like Mr. Rouveau, was never forward in forming new acquaintance. Charles, a single unincumbered man, and passionately fond of vocal music, passed many of his leisure hours at the hospitable villa; for it was a general and received opinion among all who heard her, that no singer, either public or private, ever could boast of a voice of so much sweetness and pathos, with so much compass, attended with so little exertion, as that of Mrs. Edmonds.

Here, with all the ardent enthusiasm of a true soldier’s feelings, would Charles sit, while she sang to him the sweet and plaintive air of *Rosline Castle*: the expression she threw into her song, made the tear flow down his cheek, to the memory of those many fellow-veterans who had perished, either quietly in garrison, or in the more active field of honour:

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\**Historique*.

“Their bodies lie buried in peace!”

The sweet requiem of *Rosline Castle* followed them to their final abode, and their faithful soldiers, the followers of their fortunes, have fired the last volley over their grave! All the powers of Charles Marsham’s mind seemed to take their visionary flight to the tomb of the warrior. The melody of Mrs. Edmond’s voice carried him there; its melody brought him back to reason.

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## CHAP. VIII.

AN APOLOGY AND A DINNER, *EN FAMILLE*.

—To dazzle let the vain design;  
To raise the thought, and touch the heart, be thine.

POPE.

MARY, on her return home from Mrs. Susanna Bradbury's, crept softly to her chamber, and found her sister in a profound sleep: her back being turned towards her, she did not discover the rueful appearance of her wounded face till the morning; when she saw her eyes swelled and black, and her cheeks bearing several scratches; while she complained that her limbs ached to that degree, she could not stir from her bed.

Margaret confessed what had happened to her, yet she was ashamed to divulge, even to her sister, the primary cause of her disaster: but Mary had penetration enough to know that some flight of imagination had carried her sister to that shattered part of the house in search of adventures.

Margaret was prevented going to church by the woeful appearance of her figure, and her sister stayed at home with her, to nurse and amuse her: however, she felt herself able to rise some time before dinner, and when she saw the roast-pig put on the table, she could not forbear blushing, especially as she saw a broad grin on the face of Phelim, as *he* glanced towards it when he was helping the servant (who generally attended at table) to carry in the rest of the dinner articles.

Scarcely had they sat down at the hour of *three*, when the Rector and Sir Charles made their appearance to pay a *morning* visit; both expressing much concern to hear the cause of the young ladies being absent from church, which they had learnt from the Reverend Mr. Marsham. Sir Charles, with great difficulty, kept his countenance, but was the most voluble of the two, while the Rector in evident confusion cast down his eyes, particularly when they met those of Mary, who blushed at the recollection of his improper behaviour to her the evening she last saw him.

"I am ashamed," said Mr. Leslie, "to call at this unseasonable hour; but I came to request your company next Wednesday to dine only with ourselves, *en famille*, quite in the rough; all of you must come positively."

"I am afraid," said Mr. Edward Marsham, "that it will not be in the power of my girls to accept the honour of your invitation; for you see the condition of Margaret, from a bad fall she had yesterday, and I am sure her sister will not leave her."—"And I am sure she *shall* not leave her!" quickly replied the Rector, "because my house is such a short distance, that, she will be well enough to go there; and what signifies her appearance? Not a soul will see her but ourselves." "Besides," said Sir Charles, looking passionately on Margaret, "nothing can diminish the loveliness of Miss Margaritta's countenance, nor divest it of its charms, and——."

"Sir," said Edward gravely, "my daughters have neither of them any pretensions to beauty, and whoever extols that of *this* poor girl," added he, as he leant over Margaret's

chair, “is only, by such pointed ridicule, affronting *her* understanding, and rendering *himself* despicable!”

Sir Charles bit his lips, and felt too much mortified to dare look up to Margaret; who was casting up her eyes, and giving him every meaning glance which might serve to express the hard rigidity of her father: while the Rector sighed, and still hung down his head. Sir Charles endeavoured to stammer out something of *peculiar fascinations*, and that beauty was all *in idea*, that which pleased *one* taste, might not *another*, with all the *et-ceteras* of common-place stuff adopted on similar occasions.

The Rector relieved him, by saying, as he addressed himself particularly to Ralph, “Come, I assure you, my good sir, it is rather an interested motive, which makes me request the favour of your company: I have a pond, well stocked with carp and tench, but I think it wants dragging, will you lend me two of your men on Wednesday, and let them come early; we’ll have a carp feast, and be as snug and merry as possible.” He then with all the ease of a man who knows how to be at home every where, walked to the sideboard and helped himself to a glass of ale.

It gave our farm-house inhabitants, together with the worthy Curate, much consequence in the country, to be so particularly noticed by the Rector and his noble family; and they all consented to go, if Margaret was well enough. The Rector, who was the last to quit the parlour, purposely dropped his glove: *matter of fact* Ralph, who thought it not possible for a clergyman, a man married too, and to a fine young woman, to make love to his niece, said, “Mary, my dear, give Mr. Leslie his glove.” Mary picked it up, and said, “Sir, you have dropped your glove.” He affected not to hear, and Mary had to follow him into the hall; where he said, as he took the glove from her, “Oh, Miss Marsham, forgive my rudeness last Thursday night! Forgive the effects of inebriety, and honour me by only reading that paper,” and hastily putting a small note into her hand, he darted out of the house.

Mary may be accused of imprudence, because she before kept to herself the Rector’s libertine behaviour, and also that she instantly consigned to her pocket the aforesaid note, and sat down again to table, though not without confusion, yet with all the composure she could assume. But Mary by such conduct shewed *exemplary* prudence: she knew the Rector had it in his power, should her father offend him, not only to deprive him of his countenance, but of his present situation as curate of Eglantine; and she knew her parent would not tamely see his daughter insulted, without offending the insultor; and also, that her uncle Charles, warm in his temper to a degree of rashness, would annihilate the being who should dare to take an improper liberty with *either* of his nieces, *particularly* with his favourite Mary. She knew also that every virtuous woman has an impenetrable shield, in the correctness of her own conduct, and without the parade of outrageous chastity, Mary was purity and prudence personified.

After dinner she retired to her chamber, and fastening the door, perused the following lines with great satisfaction, ignorant of, and inexperienced in the arts of libertines.

“MADAM,

“With the deepest sense of my impropriety of behaviour, suffer me to intreat, and obtain from your clemency, forgiveness for the rude manner in which I treated you at the time you was attending to the fire-works last Thursday. What must you think of a man, under the most sacred character, a man wedded to the woman whom *alone* he loves!



bound by the laws of hospitality, at his own house and table to afford comfort to all, nor pain the mind or feelings of one individual. Oh! Miss Marsham, my guests were numerous; wine, that fatal enemy to prudence and virtue, flowed in abundance; and it is the master's task not only to promote, but to do honour to every bumper: the pernicious juice of the grape made me mad! but returning reason brought to my conscious remembrance, my shameful behaviour to you. Assure me, when next we meet, by that sweet freedom, by that enchanting cheerfulness you observe with those you esteem, that you sincerely and readily pardon him, who will ever be, with the most profound respect,

MADAM,  
 your most obedient,  
 humble servant,  
 THEODORE LESLIE."

Mary felt happy and gratified; for she had dreaded a second visit to the rectory. "Mr. Leslie," said she to herself, "sees much of the great world; fashion warps his manners, and often spoils his conversation, but I believe his heart is good: I entirely forgive him, and it behoves me to treat with cheerful respect a person so much above us, and who may be a friend to my father and my uncle Charles."

We will pass over the days till the arrival of Wednesday: the scratches of Margaret's face, being only on the surface, were healed; but under her eyes, the convalescent bruises were turned green; however, her father and uncles, knowing, in her best looks, she never could charm by her beauty, persuaded her to go in a bonnet, or put a green shade over her eyes; but that she positively refused to do.

Mary, with great taste, pinned a veil on her sister's head, which partially hid her eyes, gave a softness to her features, and Margaret never looked so well in her life: but no, she persisted in the resolution she had formed in the morning, which was to go habited as Prior's *nut-brown maid*; therefore, a blue bandeau of ribbon was the only covering she would put on her head, which she brought down a little over the worst-looking eye.

Mary, in spite of a kind of lowness of spirits, which she endeavoured to persuade herself proceeded only from the indifference she felt about going to this chit-chat dinner, yet never was longer in dressing, nor ever took more pains with her person; she drew the little straggling ringlet over the temple, displayed the well-turned arm through a sleeve of cobweb thinness, and

"All was art, that look'd like accident."

Alas! the sisters found, on their arrival at the parsonage, that they had essayed to charm in vain; for, to the disappointment of Mary, Lady Isabella and Frederic Harrington had gone out together, and were not expected home till the evening—this disappointment too, we must confess, was embittered by a tincture of jealousy.

Sir Charles Sefton was gone on a fishing party, and it was quite uncertain whether he would return home that night: the dinner party, therefore, consisted only of Lady Caroline Leslie, who had the vapours, and was consequently very indifferent company; as all the entertainment she afforded was in gaping, and then most politely apologizing for her

rudeness: Mrs. Kennedy was cross and disappointed, from her book-seller having beat down her lately-disposed of work to a few guineas, for which she had promised herself an hundred pounds; Sir Edward Harrington, always amiable, always steadily cheerful, as usual; the Rector, softly insinuating to Mary, and kindly civil to all his guests; Ralph, plain and honest, with now and then a dry joke escaping him; Edward, serious and taciturne; Charles, gay and happy; and poor Mary, desirous of shewing forgiveness with a sweet smile, timidly extended her hand to the seemingly contrite Theodore as she first entered, which he gratefully took, without, however, daring to give it the smallest pressure.

After partaking of a dinner which was given at rather an early hour for such polite people as the Leslies, a walk was proposed by the Rector to the fish-pond at the bottom of his garden, and which was not to be dragged till the evening; and Mr. Leslie, drawing his lady's arm through his, said, "Come, Caroline, you do not seem well to-day, the air will do you good." Charles mechanically took the hand of his favourite niece, who was rejoiced to see so unusual a sight as the Rector and his wife walking together! Sir Edward, who never liked to see any one an object of neglect, took hold of Margaret to escort her, and kindly chatted with her on various subjects: he found she did not want sense, though in his life he had never met so romantic a character; he warned her, with the gentleness of a parent, to be careful of giving way to it: and, though neither his fine manly person, nor his ideas were at all to her taste, yet she plumed herself on a *new conquest*, and dreaded the *persecutions* of this *tyrannical old lover*.

Phelim O'Gurphy chanced to be one of Mr. Marsham's men, who was employed as an assistant to drag the fish-ponds—arrayed in a dirty striped waistcoat, *sans chemise*, but not a *sans-culotte*, he displayed, by a chasm between his waistcoat and the waistband of his *lower garments*, the natural and almost snowy whiteness of his skin; Margaret loosed her arm from that of the Baronet, and

"Sigh'd and look'd,  
"Sigh'd and look'd,  
"And sigh'd again."

Sir Edward walked round to the other side of the pond, with the rest of the gentlemen, to look at the full net which the men had brought to land; and while Lady Caroline condescended to ask Mary a few trifling questions, the most of which she answered herself, Margaret, lost in rhapsodical musings, at length uttered in soliloquy,

"How oft had Henry chang'd his sly disguise,"

when a voice from behind sighed out the following answer—

"Unmark'd by all but *beauteous* Emma's eyes!"

She turned their *bruise-encompassed* orbs, and beheld Sir Charles Sefton, standing close beside her, arrayed in a fustain jacket; a pair of brown leather gaiters, not very clean; a leathern cap on his head, and a yellow silk handkerchief, spotted with black, round his

neck; nor was he, thus “unadorned, adorned the most,” for he really looked *hideous*: yet Margaret directly discovered in the *disguise*, and especially from the words he addressed to her, something strangely mysterious, some great adventure in agitation.

While she stood buried in profound thought, he said, “Will my charming Margaritta excuse me, while I go and arrange my appearance a little? I hastened from the party I was engaged with, in order that I might enjoy the company of the most bewitching among her sex.” He then, bowing, hastened to his toilette.

The truth was, that, fatigued with the angling sport, where he had not experienced the good luck of even one *nibble*, he had returned to the parsonage, vexed and disappointed; but seeing poor Margaret making that rueful appearance, and apparently in one of her enthusiastic musings, his *mischievous* humour returned, and he found himself standing by her at the very moment when she uttered aloud her quotation from Prior.

Sir Charles was apt, and had a good memory; his own *deshabille*, his determination to make a sport of Margaret in every way he could think of, caused him to answer her in that way, which proved most delightful to her gratified vanity, and she turned from Phelim in disgust; who, notwithstanding his ugliness, and even under his present habiliments, was the best-looking of her two imaginary rivals.

She now joined the rest of the female party; and the ladies walked towards an arbour, where, as the evening was uncommonly warm, sat Mrs. Kennedy enjoying the shade, and pensively leaning her cheek on her hand: at her entrance into this arbour, the cheek of Mary glowed, and her bosom heaved with various emotions: here she had witnessed the protestations of love from Frederic Harrington to Lady Isabella Emerson; and here too, she recollected, with not an unpleasurable sensation, how ardent he had been to be reinstated in her own favour, and how anxious at the distress he saw her in!

Lady Caroline kept musing on *pic repic* and *capot*, the four honours, the grand decided cassino, at one deal! the subtle and quickly-gained *reservé*, and all the delightful visions of a run of luck at the gaming-table!

Margaret’s anxious eyes were frequently turned towards the entrance: every minute appeared to her an age, that kept Sir Charles at his toilette; and *many* and *careful* were the *minutes* which he dedicated to his mirror! At length she heard footsteps, which she felt assured were those of a man; but they appeared too heavy for those of her devoted Knight, and she feared they proceeded from some one of more corpulency; however, she consoled herself with thinking that perhaps some other “*sly disguise*” might be the cause, and she ventured to peep out at the flowery arch which opened into this fragrant abode.

Thence she beheld, breathing hard and fanning herself with her pocket-handkerchief, the delectable Lady Wringham; who, entering the arbour, exclaimed, “Dear me, how *hot* it is!” The ladies rose, and Lady Caroline gave her a distant curtesy “Well! my lady,” said lady Wringham, “what does your ladyship think? Mr. Leslie came, you know, on Monday, to ax us to dinner:”—“Did he?” said Lady Caroline. “Why yes, to be sure, my lady, did not your ladyship know that?”—“No,” said Lady Caroline, with the utmost *sang froid*, as she sat picking a rose to pieces: “Well, *howsoever*,” continues Lady Wringham, “we could not come, ’cause we expected a gentleman from London; but Mr. Leslie would not let *me* rest, and there he comes just now, this *a’ternoon*, and absolutely dragged me away, as a body may say, from my company; he said I must come and sup with you, and he would hardly let me stay to make my *’pologies*.”

The polite Lady Caroline forced herself to say, "We are very glad of your company, Lady Wringham, and we hope Sir John will bring his friend with him." "La! I don't know," said Lady Wringham, "Mr. Leslie said, *as how*, if he had but *me*, he did not care;" and she gave a girlish giggle.

Lady Caroline looked at Mrs. Kennedy, and gave a shrug and a sneer, not unseen by Lady Wringham, who giving Mary a jog with her elbow, said in a whisper, "I'll be hang'd if she isn't jealous!" The sentence did not quite escape Lady Caroline; poor Mary was embarrassed at perceiving it; while the high dame of quality regarded them both with scorn. Lady Wringham, was, however, in high spirits, and nothing seemed to embarrass *her*.

"Do you know, my lady," said she, "just as your ladyship's husband came in, I was in the midst of a grand argument with our London friend about titles, and I cannot make it out, my lady, why your ladyship is a *lady*, and your husband is not a lord!"

"Because," replied Lady Caroline, "my husband's near relation, the Marquis, is yet living; besides, if he was not, Mr. Leslie is not the first to inherit the title: now, for instance, if Sir John Wringham had brothers or nephews, would not your eldest son be Sir John, after his father's death, before them?"

"Yes, yes, my lady, I know all that; but then, as you are called my lady, why is not he called my lord?"—"Because," replied Lady Caroline, "I am a lady in my own right; my father was an earl; I therefore still retain my maiden title of Lady Caroline, though I have altered my surname to Leslie."—"Well then, I say," answered the ignorant Lady Wringham, "that I think he ought to be called *Lord Caroline!*"

None of the ladies could forbear a smile; but Lady Caroline was so vexed to find the explanation she had given her so little comprehended, that she said with some degree of sarcastic spite, "Why, Lady Wringham, a woman never can exalt a man to her dignity, but I am sure *you* very well know that a man of title and fortune can raise a woman to the rank of *lady*, though she might be in a *very* low situation *indeed*, before he rendered both *himself* and *her* ridiculous by such disproportioned marriage." The Baronet's lady had understanding enough, however, perfectly to take in the full sense of her ladyship's pointed speech; and a silence commenced, which threatened to continue long and obstinate, when, as the dusky shades of night appeared fast approaching, entered Lady Isabella, gay as Euphrosyne, and looking all that was lovely and fascinating: close, like her shadow, followed Frederic Harrington. And now various sentiments shot like lightning across the breasts of the inmates of the bower. A deep blush mutually dyed the cheeks of Frederic and Mary, though glad to see her ladyship. Margaret was disappointed that her valiant and constant Knight was so long in arranging his dress, and did not yet make his appearance. A gleam of comfort entered the bosom of Lady Caroline, when she reflected that she should be able, with the assistance of her obliging Harrington, to make an excellent whist party. Lady Isabella had hoped that some of the fine things that Frederic had said to her, as he drove her home in his uncle's curricule, had their origin in truth; she was, therefore, in too good a humour, to be given much that evening to her natural propensity of *quizzing*; and, passing Margaret with a slight "how d'ye," and a still slighter one to Mary, she sat herself down by her Kennedy, as she called her, and restored, by her charming conversation and condescending familiarity, some degree of alacrity to that lady's depressed spirits.

On the joyful news that Lady Isabella was returned, Sir Charles Sefton, though he took more pains with his person, dispatched the arrangement of his figure as quick as possible; and highly perfumed with *esprit de rose*, dressed most becomingly, and animated with the unexpected joy of finding her he idolized returned so soon, his glass reflected to his imagination, what indeed he did *almost* look,—a *little bit*, a *very, very* little bit of—*an Adonis!*

Margaret's heart fluttered as he entered the arbour, but, alas! advancing to Lady Isabella, he seemed not even to see "*the most bewitching among her sex!*" but intreated in a loud, though tender whisper, that her ladyship would not risk a health so precious to him, by remaining any longer in the night air.

All the gentlemen were now seen approaching; and they enforced the same request to every lady. The exterior of Sir Charles Sefton, with all its *dissipation-acquired* defects, evinced the man of fashion; Lady Isabella had never seen him look so well as on that evening, and she thought, if he always looked so, she should be, by no means, ashamed of being the rich and dashing wife of such a man: but she had also another more powerful motive for holding out to him every hope, at the present hour,—she thought herself sure of Frederic Harrington's heart, and she was determined to prove it, by exciting his jealousy: she therefore engrossed Sir Charles entirely to herself, and took no notice whatever of either the friend she had before hailed by the appellation of "*sweet interesting girl,*" and whom she promised to make the depository of her most secret thoughts, nor yet of the man whom she really loved, and who, a few hours before, had well nigh drawn from her the confession of her regard for him.

Lady Caroline approved of the proposal of instantly quitting the gardens, and, unasked, took the arm of Frederic. Sir Edward Harrington still walked with Edward Marsham, the former shewing him some pointed epigrams, which he had received from a correspondent, composed upon Mr. W. and Mrs. C.; and he rejoiced with the good Curate, to see faction and enmity to royalty defeating themselves: while Charles, deeply interested in all that could give comfort to the parental bosom of his sovereign, and in each thing that tended to clear the fame of every branch of his illustrious family, looked the happiest of the happy; particularly as news of a private nature had also arrived from this correspondent of the worthy Sir Edward, which materially concerned the brave lieutenant; and Charles, on moving from the arbour, took an hand of each of his nieces, telling them with a smile beaming satisfaction, that he had fine news to tell them when he got home: he then quitted them, wondering at what it could be, to join his brother Ralph.

Margaret sent round "her inquiring eye," but saw Sir Charles looking on Lady Isabella with so much passionate adoration, and so assiduously attentive to wrap her shawl about her fine form, while his *adored* Margaritta was suffered, neglected and unobserved, to pull her *very* small cambric pocket-handkerchief over her bosom, and which did not half cover it, and content herself with the arm of her sister, without any complaisant beau so much as seeming to know they were in the company.

The officious Rector escorted Lady Wringham, who bore upon his arm with a weight he seemed ready to sink under; and in this state they entered the house.

It had not yet struck ten, and it was impossible to think of going to supper! Lady Caroline, Frederic Harrington, Sir Charles Sefton, and Lady Isabella (who hated whist, but yet would play to oblige *him*), made up a whist party; but as it was impossible to

secure the attention of the volatite lady to so serious a game, they changed it to a cassino: she lost there immensely, threw up her cards, and challenged Edward Marsham, who had just finished a game at piquet with Mrs. Kennedy, to a game at chess, which he gladly accepted; while Mrs. Kennedy took the seat of Lady Isabella, and the cassino was again changed to whist. Sir Edward Harrington and Ralph occupied a back-gammon table; while the Rector, Lady Wringham, Charles, and his two nieces, made a party at loo.

Lady Caroline, who never knew when to rise from the card-table, continued at it till near one o'clock, when, after the Rector frequently reminding her, she discovered it was time to go to supper! and they descended to the dining-parlour to partake of an elegant cold collation.

Mrs. Kennedy had been a winner; Lady Caroline, as usual, a considerable loser; she was therefore scarcely civil to Mrs. Kennedy, who was in high spirits, resolving, if her ladyship's ill humour continued, or indeed if she saw any prospect of her borrowing the sum of her, which she had just lost, she would set off for London directly, or pay some other convenient visit.

Mrs. Kennedy had a talent of telling fortunes, by a pack of cards, and that in a very diverting kind of way, entirely out of the common track; and, like the jumble of accidental predictions in an almanack, some things she foretold, had really come to pass. Our farm-house party were moving to withdraw, just before the hour sounded three; but the Rector positively swore they should not stir yet, and said, "Come, Kennedy, give us a shuffle, you understand me!"

Mrs. Kennedy desired a servant to bring her down one of the packs of cards from the drawing-room: "Now," said she, "you must not one of you move, till I have told all your fortunes: I cast a spell around you," continued she, and rising with the most playful and good-humoured *badinage*, she waved her little circular fan round the head of each, and reseated herself.

Margaret trembled, but instantly sent a look across the table to Sir Charles Sefton, but had the mortification of finding it not returned. Lady Caroline, who seemed to revive at only the *sight* of her favourite *book*, smiled and said, "What a droll creature, Kennedy, you are!" and now, with much ingenuity and archness, did Mrs. Kennedy tell that kind of fortune, which she thought would give her rich and noble listeners most pleasure. Lady Isabella was less pleased with what she told her, than Sir Charles; yet, to carry on the farce of the evening against Frederic, who was seated on the other side of her, directly opposite to Mary, she smiled on Sir Charles with much *seeming* satisfaction, while, to the great astonishment of Margaret, he blessed Mrs. Kennedy as a dear witty little angel!

The fortuneteller told Lady Wringham, that though she *was* married, there was a *black man* who sighed for her; and loved her dearly.—The noble and reverend Theodore hereupon gave a soft sigh, and Lady Wringham simpered, and said, "La! Mrs. *Thingummy*, how could you find that out? Well, I declare I never had any faith in *omiums* before, but I do really believe as how you're a witch!" Margaret again looked across the table; Sir Charles never heeded her.

When Mrs. Kennedy came to tell the future fate of the two girls, she had no interest in flattering *them*, and she was guided only by the different appearances of clubs, hearts, diamonds, and spades, as they chanced to follow each other, or be mingled together; and

she told their fortunes, as she had been taught to prognosticate, from the different succession of the cards alone, without deviation from those hieroglyphics.

She told the astonished, convinced, though trembling and horror-struck Margaret, that she loved a very fair man, short of stature; but that she was deceived in him, for if she believed him to be a gentleman, she would find herself very much mistaken, for he was the very lowest of the low-born: that a very rich and great man, much older than herself, would fall in love with her; but she must take care of him, for he had evil designs against her. Margaret eagerly asked, if she had yet seen him? Mrs. Kennedy said, her cards did not tell; but if she had, he was not yet in love with her.

To Mary, she told, that she was a little given to jealousy, but that she had no cause, for a young gentleman loved her beyond all the girls he had ever seen; and that at last they would certainly be united; but they would meet with a great many troubles and obstacles at first: that she would find, or had already found this gentleman rather too free in his moral principles; but that he was only led astray by fashion, and rather an extravagant turn of mind; he would soon love her, and her good conduct and prudence would restore him to himself, and entirely eradicate all his former errors. As Mary accidentally raised her eyes, she beheld those of Frederic Harrington tenderly fixed upon her: it was a moment of electrical bliss that then darted across her bosom! all that could be expressed from every pure and affectionate sentiment of the soul, beamed upon her blushing countenance from the fine, intelligent eyes of the handsome Frederic! love approaching to adoration, respect, admiration, and softness lighted up his visage, and in that one glance, and the accompanying and visible emotion of Mary, their hearts were irrevocably pledged to each other!

The repeated attentions of Frederic afterwards to Lady Isabella savoured more of respect and homage to her beauty alone, than any thing approximate to a softer passion: when trouble was foretold to Mary, though only in childish play, with a pack of cards, Frederic looked anxiously towards her. In vain the Reverend and Honourable Theodore Leslie essayed to “look unutterable things;” in vain he contrived to address her, by name, that she might look towards *him*, when this, her real lover was foretold, by the eloquent Mrs. Kennedy; Mary saw not, nor thought of any one but Frederic Harrington.

How oft had Margaret, during the unfolding of her strange and complicated fortune, turned her supplicating eyes towards Sir Charles Sefton! he had no looks but for Lady Isabella: and when Margaret’s imaginary lovers were mentioned amongst the kings and knaves by Mrs. Kennedy, the poor romantic girl remarked nothing but laughter and whisperings between the noble lovers; but not one look could she gain, not one of her own meaning ones could she get returned, by either her quality friend, or her once *fascinated adorer!*

Trifling as was this last amusement, Mrs. Kennedy knew how to render it extremely entertaining by her witty talents, and her versatility of expression—Edward Marsham, though not particularly pleased with so many falsehoods, yet wondered at her uncommon abilities, which could stamp such an agreeable interest on “trifles light as air.”

Sir Edward Harrington and Charles Marsham regarded the younger part of the merry auditors with pleased benevolence: and there were indeed scarcely any of the party that could be called *really old*: while Ralph, all *matter of fact*, looked excessively serious; and thought within himself, that if she told true, she must absolutely deal in the *black art*, and

if not, she must be naturally very much addicted to lying, to sit and invent so many *off hand*.

At length the clock chimed a quarter to four: Lady Wringham's servants were called, and she declared she had never passed so *niest* an evening in all her life; and that Mrs. Kennedy was the *funniest* and the *most cleverest* woman she ever knew.

The farm-house family then took their leave; the back of Sir Charles was towards his Margaritta, but he never turned when she went away, nor offered now to accompany her home—sad reverse since the ball night! Mary, elated, yet she hardly knew why, (for the scene between Harrington and Lady Caroline, as she again passed through the little anti-chamber, darted its momentary agony across her memory,) took the arm of her uncle Charles with a smile, and endeavoured to drive it from intruding on her mind.

Margaret, sadly disappointed and depressed, took hold of his other arm, and, with Ralph and Edward in their same serious and unaltered state of mind, walked home, by the light of the moon, contending with the beams of the morning.

END OF VOL. I.

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ROMANCE READERS

AND

ROMANCE WRITERS.

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ROMANCE READERS

AND

ROMANCE WRITERS:

A Satirical Novel.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
'A PRIVATE HISTORY OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND, &C.'

GNATHO. *Quid agitur?*

PARMENO. *Statur.*

GANTHO. *Video.*

*Numquid nam hic, quod nolis, vides?*

PARMENO. *Te.*

GNATHO. *Crede.*

TERENCE.

M.G. LEWIS, ROSA MATILDA, HORSLEY

CURTIES, &c. *parlent.*

*Hélas, mon Dieu, craignez tout d'un auteur en courroux,*

*Qui peut——* BOILEAU.

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1810.

THE EFFECTS  
OF  
ROMANCE READING.  
CHAP. IX.

SIR JOHN AND LADY WRINGHAM.

No huswife led a better life;  
She to *false steps* was e'en hard-hearted,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
And thought the nation ne'er could thrive,  
Till all *frail girls* were burnt alive!

PRIOR.

LADY WRINGHAM has been introduced to the reader, as a *ci-devant* laundress; and such was *really* her origin, though she was so very much noticed by the rector and his family.\*

Sir John Wringham, the diminutive husband of this lady, was a wealthy baronet, and the last of his noble house: he was sent to study the law at the Temple, and which dry business seemed to accord very well with abilities in which were united much shrewdness with intense plodding. He wished for an heir, to inherit his title and dignity, but he had an almost unconquerable preference to the life of a bachelor; and he continued to study away at his chambers in the Temple, until he had actually attained his forty-fifth year.

However, Sir John was rich and great, as far as related to his purse and the ancestry of his family; though mean in aspect and low in stature: twice, without much exertion on his part, was he, in succeeding elections, chosen member for the county of ———, and sparing of his breath in St. Stephen's chapel, except in giving his *aye*, when he plainly saw most votes would carry the day; and as sparing of his good dinners and of unlocking his coffers; his respiration never suffered from overexertion. And while a steak and a pint of wine contented him at the Temple Coffee-house, the strong box, being unincumbered with any other visitors than this *sparing* baronet, it was so well filled, that Sir John scarcely knew, himself, the extent of his riches.

One laundress had washed for him and cleaned his chambers for ten years; she was pretty, but rather masculine, and turned of thirty: for three whole years, had Sir John been assailing her chastity in vain! "*By gosh*, she knew how to manage such a little *whiffling* being as he!" and having that kind of *violent* virtue, which scratches and fights to defend itself, many a time has she laid the amorous knight sprawling on the floor, from a well aimed blow, and confined him to his chambers, under pretence of a cold, from the black eyes inflicted by her Amazonian fist.

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\*Her Ladyship's origin—*Historique*.

Once in a quarter, Sir John Wringham used to meet a party of brother students at a club, held at the house of an inn-keeper, who had assisted Sir John in gaining his elections: there, as the bottle passed briskly about, was it much lamented that the baronetage of Wringham should be in danger of extinction from the want of heirs male. This repeated remark dwelt on the mind of the knight; and he wished to bequeath his honours to posterity: he loved Sukey Wiggins, his laundress; he felt he could not be happy without her, and he had many *striking* proofs of her virtue; which finding impossible to conquer, he actually made his honourable proposals, in due form: and the astonished and delighted Sukey, biting her little finger till it bled, to see if she was actually awake; sending for the apothecary, to know if she was in her right senses; and going to a famous fortune-teller, who, after she had thrown out, herself, every possible hint, told her she would certainly be very soon married to a very rich man, and be a *lady*,—she soon knew that Sir John Wringham had really, in right *arnest*, made honourable love to her.

She did not want for an abundant share of low cunning; and she played the tyrant over her infatuated lover, as well as any high bred lady of birth and fashion could possibly have done; and seeing herself sure of her man, she did not let him rest, till she had obtained from him a written promise to let her have the entire disposal of much more than the half of his immense fortune.

And now behold her, Lady Wringham! proud, haughty, insolent, and overbearing—her ignorance, which was unnoticed in her humble state, now rendered glaring and conspicuous; pluming herself on her virtue, and more for her imaginary beauty and perfections.

If a poor, young, inexperienced girl, had the misfortune, through the perfidy of a treacherous lover,

“Before a wife, to be a nurse,”

Oh! what virulent abuse was heaped upon the *nasty creature*, by Lady Wringham! Hanging, she declared, was too good for her! such bold, infamous hussies ought to be flayed alive! At the same time, she detested the wife who had not the happiness of being a mother: she, herself, thank God, was the *joyful* mother of *eight*: but really, indeed, she must say, she did not expect to have *little ones* so fast! but it was God Almighty’s pleasure! Then if ever any lady shewed any kind of fondness for a faithful dog, a bird, or a kitten, or indeed expressed only common compassion for them; if this lady chanced, at the same time, to be childless, Lady Wringham would be sure to say, “Aye, aye, if you had any *little ones*, you’d never think about *them there* brutes.”

Such is always the common-place jargon proceeding from a narrow and contracted heart! children, the dearest tie under heaven, creatures, when not even bound to us, by nature’s strongest bands, the most helpless, the most interesting objects of creation! But cold must be the heart that, though it gives to you its tenderest affections, and feelings of a widely differing nature, can yet unnoticed, and too often spurned, see the fawnings of the fond spaniel; and the faithful guardian of our person and property is the dog of every description. Oft-times, by such pretended fond parents, is the imprisoned bird pining for want of food; and, unrewarded, the half-famished cat for her useful abilities, nor given a share of that food which her vigilance, in keeping the house clear from vermin, has deserved. The principles of honour should make us kind to the brute

creation; we are their lords; he who destroys his fellow creature “shall surely die:” the lives of animals are ours; they are given into our hands, and it behoves us to treat them, by no means with ridiculous fondness, but with kindness and humanity; while we reflect,

“That HE who doth the ravens feed,  
As providently caters for the sparrows.”

The three first children with whom Lady Wringham presented her husband, were, much to his disappointment, all girls: at length, a puisne boy made his appearance. The country air being recommended for the future baronet, a magnificent house and grounds were purchased at Eglantine, and my Lady affected to be quite enamoured of the *rural* scenes about this charming village.

Here the young gentleman grew strong and hearty: the prolific lady added four more children, two boys and two girls to the family; and with those that were old enough, she strutted to church, like an old fat hen, with her chickens trotting after her.

The *eighth* child, Mr. Leslie had the honour of christening, when first this *amiable* lady was introduced to the reader; and four times had he the more agreeable honour of touching twenty bright guineas, which the lady picked out for him, each time she had a child made a christian; for she liked to “do things *like themselves!*”

She spared no expence in the articles of dress; nor in any kind of ostentatious vanity; but never gave away a sixpence to relieve a distressed and worthy object—“there was the parish,” she would say, “for those poor wretches! and God knows, Sir John paid enough to the poor’s rates”—and as for common beggars, “they were such a set of *wagabones*, that they ought to be whipped at the cart’s tail.”

When first she married, she had a little diffidence of herself, and held her tongue; but her equipage, her husband’s rank and wealth, procured her numerous acquaintance; she met with many ignorant people among her betters; they said all that came uppermost: she was therefore resolved in her turn to dash forward, and be as easy and as unreserved as the best of them! and if any chose to laugh at her, she would think within herself, “let those laugh *as wins*, I can *buy* them all.”

Her profusion, which was mistaken for carelessness about money, and knowing she had the entire management of Sir John’s heavy purse, induced the rector, who was getting rather out at elbows, to pay implicit court to her ladyship; as he hoped, some day, to be able to coax her out of a good round sum of money, to be paid in *any* way that was most agreeable to *her*, or which would be much better, as most convenient to *himself*.

Lady Wringham at this time was grown *very* fat, old looking and coarse; and never would be any thing else, than *very* vulgar; yet, the fashionable Mr. Leslie, to carry his point, did not scruple to flirt with her in that kind of way, as made her fancy he had a tender inclination for her person; which made her really not wonder at her elevation to dignity; but she began to think even that she might have done better for herself, with the irresistible charms she was mistress of.

She was uncommonly proud and arrogant to all her country neighbours, except those she dignified by the appellation of quite *your tip-top quality folks*: she would sometimes honour Mrs. Susanna Bradbury by a call; and two or three times in the winter, invite her and her niece to a family dinner! but begged, above all things, Mrs. Susan would never think of introducing *her* to her friend Mrs. Edmonds, as it might very much injure her virtue and *reputation*: Mrs. Susan took no notice of her silly remarks; she

reflected from whence they came, and that it was literally casting “pearl before swine,” to attempt, by dint of reasoning, to convince obstinate and ignorant self-approbation.

Lady Wringham honoured the family at the farm house for some time, only by a swaggering curtesy, an high *elevation* and violent *toss* of the head; but since the last visit of the rector to his living, when he brought down his family, and she saw them all take so much notice of the young ladies, she was much more familiar; but she never visited them before, except once or twice in a year: she said, she believed they were quite *commonish* kind of people, for she had never heard of one *title* among them.

Sir John was something of an original character, before his marriage; he was now a mere non-entity, particularly in the presence of his dear Sukey; who governed with absolute sway—when he did even dare to reflect, he wondered at himself that she could ever charm him so much, to give up the reins to her management as he had done—but then, how many dear children she had brought! *doubly* dear, for they were very expensive, and Sir John was getting fast onwards to that period of life, which, when the affections attaching themselves beyond judicious boundaries, is very aptly called *dotage*. In these spoilt children “of his age,” did Sir John centre all his delight; he was continually seen dandling the smaller ones on his knee; playing with them at *see-saw*, and singing to them all the babies’ songs, and reciting the old nurse’s tales, which he had heard himself, in his days of infancy; then he would sometimes lead the others about the grounds and the environs of the village; while perfect strangers to him or his title, who might chance to visit that part of the country, and the unruly children have escaped him, and been, perhaps, in the apparent danger of being run over by a horse or a carriage, have much mortified him, by saying, “Do, my pretty dear, go back to *grandpapa*, when he calls you.”

Now, though there was not such a *violent* disparity of age between Lady Wringham and her husband, yet, she has given a foolish titter on such occasions, and would frequently talk to her confidential friends of her *youth* having been *sackerficed*; and tell the false-tongued rector and the *quizzing* Sir Charles Sefton, who would often flatter her for her youth and the charms of her person, “Ah! dear me; what *sinifies* title or riches? to be sure, Sir John is a very good husband, and a loving father to the *little ones*, but I have a sad prospect before me of being nothing more *nor* a nurse to him, in the very prime of my life!”

## CHAP. X.

## NEW PROPENSITIES.

Fancy, whose delusions vain  
 Sport themselves with human brain;  
 Rival thou of Nature's power,  
 Cans't, from thy exhaustless store,  
 Bid a tide of sorrow flow,  
 And overwhelm the soul in the deepest woe;  
 Or, in the twinkling of an eye,  
 Raise it to mirth and jollity!

COOPER'S *Poetical Blossoms*.

MARGARET, now in some degree, convinced of the caprice of quality, moped away her hours at home, during a long rainy week: all her bright visions of conquest seemed fled, while the prophecies of Mrs. Kennedy occupied all her thoughts.

Confident in her own mind, that all she had foretold her would be verified, she detested the very sight of poor Phelim O'Gurphy, and was sure that he must be "the *lowest of the low-born.*"

She flew to her old resource of incredible romance; and read till she almost made herself sick and blind. Mary felt the power of love; and she was sure also that her love was hopeless; could she ever raise *her* thoughts to the nephew of Sir Edward Harrington? doomed by birth, wealth, and fashion, to figure only in the great world! Impossible. The rose fled from her cheek, and though her duty made her cheerfully and implicitly follow all her former occupations, yet her spirits sunk, and her father and uncles saw, with much anxiety, this, the loveliest blossom which adorned the house and garden of Eglantine Farm, drooping and fading daily before their eyes: Mary, whose cheerful vivacity, whose continual gaiety inspired them all with gladness, now smiled but faintly, and that smile was evidently forced.

Edward, the most affectionate of fathers, trembled for both his girls; he fancied that their mother had been consumptive, and that they both inherited it; for though Mary looked not so fresh as formerly, yet, in the presence of Margaret, who was now as pale as a ghost, she looked better.

In the mean time the girls were both indulged in every thing they could wish for; compelled only to drink asses' milk; to take every thing good and strengthening, in order to repel the silent, slow, but sure and death-dealing malady. Their malady was seated only in the heart and the imagination; it was the heart of Mary that was assailed; and though the flight of the arrow was quick and sudden, it was buried deep! while the frenzied imagination of Margaret, fed to satiety, and destroying itself by "the food it fed on," was the only cause of her heavy eye and chalky-coloured cheek.

Towards the latter end of the following week, a beautiful summer's day seemed to exhilarate every inhabitant of the farm-house; a brightness shone in the heretofore languid eyes of Mary, and she sang, as usual, while she worked; and though her songs were of the

plaintive kind, yet her listening father and uncles, who were busy arranging papers in an adjoining room, were delighted to hear that she *did* sing; but Margaret still neglected herself, and sat in a corner reading, with her fingers stuck in her uncurled and uncombed hair, her knees and chin together; while a romance of the fourteenth century laid on her lap: from which she lifted her head every now and then, to say, "La! I wish my sister would not make such a noise!"

The third time she made this remark, Mary gave a sigh, and thought, within herself, ah! why should I sing? She then applied herself to her needle, and was silent.

Just as the clock struck two, who should enter the apartment, but Frederic Harrington and Lady Isabella Emerson! the glowing rose again quickly bloomed on Mary's cheek: Harrington had never visited the farm before! an equal emotion kindled in his bosom; and Mary could not be blind to his accompanying blush and love-fraught eye.

Margaret too was highly gratified, for Lady Isabella almost flew to her, and embracing her, said, "My lovely friend, I am sure you are not well." "Oh! yes, now I am," said Margaret, speaking from the native impulse of her heart, "I was really ill, but the presence and condescension of your ladyship has quite cured me." "Sweet girl!" replied Lady Isabella, and taking up the book, she added, "Come with me into the garden; it is so delightful after the rain; and I want to have a little talk with you." She then, with a charming familiarity, took up the book, and drawing Margaret's arm through her own, walked with her into the garden: while Mary moved, to acquaint her father and uncles of the presence of these noble visitors.

Frederic, however, prevented her; "Oh! stay, Miss Marsham," said he, as he respectfully, and tremblingly took her hand, "the servant is gone to Mr. Marsham; but they are now very busy in arranging some paper, which they cannot leave; and which it will not be five minutes before they have done with; we wish not to be treated here as strangers, but as familiar friends; and, oh! suffer me, dear Miss Marsham, to enjoy those short moments, winged, indeed, too swiftly with bliss, in your charming company." "Oh! sir," said Mary, "why address me in this high-flown strain of flattery? Have you then, so very poor an opinion of my understanding, as to imagine I can be pleased with it?" "It is *concurring*, and in some degree, *afflicting* circumstances, which alone render me eager to seize the present fleeting minutes; suffer me then to make use of this blessed opportunity, the last perhaps, I shall find of unburthening my thoughts to the too amiable Miss Marsham." "The last!" involuntarily and emphatically uttered Mary, "Oh! I hope not." The manner of her uttering this simple expression, and the deep blush that suffused her cheek, imparted hope, in her brightest array, to the breast of Frederic. "The sweet illusion," said he, "of thinking that Miss Marsham regrets my absence, will soothe the pangs of separation, and act as a tutelary divinity, to steel my breast with courage and my arms with success, in the day of battle." "Battle!" repeated Mary, while the hue of the lily succeeded to the rose on her cheek, and a drop, like the dew of the morning, stood trembling on her long eyelash.

"O God!" said the empassioned Frederic, "time presses; I go, perhaps never to return; never to see you more! Pardon, I beseech you, pardon my temerity;" and he clasped the timid, though then unresisting Mary to his bosom, while he kissed off the liquid assurance of more than *common* concern for his safety.



She would fain have chid her lover, but she found it impossible; and there was a respect attending the action, which would have rendered resistance on her part (all circumstances considered) both prudish and fastidious. The servant entered, saying, "My master, sir, is quite distressed that my interruption just now, obliged him to go over a great part of the paper he was engaged with, again: and the Captain being obliged to depart next week, they are settling some family affairs of importance; but the gentlemen will really have done in less than ten minutes."

Frederic intreated him to desire his master to take his time, as Lady Isabella and himself had no particular engagement to call them home; and he inwardly blessed the delay, and prayed that Lady Isabella, towards whom he now felt perfectly indifferent, would remain some time longer with her friend: and he might make himself easy in that respect, for they had strayed to the meadows, conversing on many interesting matters.

Harrington now made the best of his time, and endowed as he was with every insinuating art of persuasion, he was not long ere he wrought on the mind of the young and innocent Mary, so far, as to draw from her a faint and timid promise, of giving him that hope of her affections, which would enable him to support the pain of absence.

Frederic Harrington had formerly been an officer in the Guards; but not well pleased with a service, active only in deeds of continued dissipation, he had quitted it, at the request of his uncle, coinciding also with his own wishes after the death of his mother.

He became acquainted with the honourable and reverend Theodore Leslie at the University of Oxford, when that gentleman had gone there to keep a long term, previous to his being made Master of Arts. Frederic was fascinated with the easy and fashionable manners of the young divine, and entered into a firm friendship with him; but his frequent loans to this reverend gentleman had so impoverished him, together with much money purposely and gallantly lost to Lady Caroline Leslie, that his uncle, entirely to wean him from so destructive and dangerous a society, though he severely felt the separation, yet judged it better that he should again enter the army, and accompany the grand expedition to the Scheldt, when he might also be of service to his country, and distinguish himself by his personal courage and merit.

Sir Edward Harrington likewise regretted that so many fine young men, who might be usefully and bravely employed, and become an honour to Great Britain and themselves, should be lounging away their hours on the pavements of Bond-street and Pall-mall. Severe might be the lot, deep the sorrow of their surviving relatives, should they perish; but they would have this consolation, that the youthful heroes died on the bed of honour, and did their part in ensuring the safety of their island from the grasp of the usurper: and such as these enable the honest artificer, the industrious farmer, and the useful citizen to carry on their employments in peace and security, and spread the table of the wealthy tradesman with "luxury and ease."

It was but in brief, that Frederic acquainted his Mary with *one* cause of his departure; which was the impoverished state of his finances: his persuasions to Lady Caroline Leslie *had conquered her*; for he had prevailed upon her to take back the sum she had lost to him, on the evening of that day he first beheld the charming Mary: this, in as delicate a manner as possible, towards her ladyship, did he explain to Mary, on the accusation he received from her, of his being a general lover. He owned that he had never

seen any woman so beautiful and fascinating, in person, as Lady Isabella Emerson; but it was *person alone*; and its “skin-deep” and fugitive impressions had departed for ever!

The irradiating mind of Mary, while it embellished her countenance, made the charms of that countenance, though quick in their effects, increasing and durable in their impression.

Mary was easily disposed to believe all that her Harrington told her—perhaps the reader may think *too* easily: but Mary was very young, Frederic irresistibly insinuating and handsome, and they were also on the point of separating, perhaps never to meet again: she had found the object of her choice *virtuous* and *innocent*, when compared to what she had once thought him; and when she reflected on the distance between them, when she knew how many high-born and wealthy ladies to whom he had a right to aspire, she felt that conscious and gratified pride which cannot but glory in being the preferred choice of such a man.

Mary was not a model of *perfection*; far from it; she was a mere human being, subject to error: she had no vice, she shuddered at the thought of committing a crime! she was prudent as any girl of eighteen, but was not without the natural weaknesses of frail mortality.

Too soon, much too soon for Frederic Harrington, and why should we endeavour to conceal it from our readers, for their own hearts will tell them, if we did not, that too soon also for Mary did the three brothers enter the parlour, and put a stop to the most interesting conversation which she had ever held with any one.

In the mean time Lady Isabella and Margaret were not idle. “My dearest girl,” said the lady, as she turned over the leaves of the volume which Margaret had been perusing, “What stuff are you reading here? Why you might as well read Mother Bunch’s Fairy Tales, or a Defence of Witchcraft.” “La! my lady,” said Margaret, “I really presumed to think that you and I were something alike in our ideas; and that your ladyship was as romantic almost as myself.”—“I, my dear?” exclaimed her ladyship; “yes, I am the most romantic creature living; but quite in a different way; I never go beyond probability; and the romances I peruse, shew me, if not the *exact* picture of human life, at least what it ought to be: I’ll send you some of *my* books; they will not stuff your brain with ideas of ghosts, magic and witchcraft; but will ennoble your ideas, enlarge your understanding, and teach you how to charm, and not so like one of the antiquated sybils you are so fond of reading about.”

Lady Isabella had the art of giving a charm to all she uttered: Margaret was convinced that all she said must be right; and she regarded her ladyship with the fondest admiration; while she felt deeply confused at her own slatternly figure, as she looked on the style and tasteful elegance of Lady Isabella’s dress: she adjusted her tucker, smoothed her dishevelled hair, as well as she could, with her fingers! but casting her eyes downwards, she saw two defects in her light pink striped gown, which she could not then possibly repair; one was a greasy spot, in circumference of about an half-crown piece; the other a large hole, much the same size, which she had burnt as she stood over the kitchen fire reading, after having given some orders to the cook-maid, and which had been caused by the red-hot poker; while just before, she had unconsciously dipped the other end in the dripping-pan, being herself wholly absorbed in the study of her favourite romance.

However, spite of her grotesque figure, Lady Isabella continued to caress her, as she wanted to make both a *tool* and a *fool* of her. She took care to tell the silly and credulous girl, in the course of their conversation, that Sir Charles Sefton was desperately in love with her.

“Indeed, my lady,” said Margaret, “I cannot think it; though to be sure, I must tell you, that the evening of Mr. Leslie’s ball, I really did think something; but, dear me, he never took the least notice of me in the world the other night, but even turned his back upon me!”

“I can tell you, my love, the reason of all that,” said the crafty Isabella; “you must know, my wise brother-in-law, Mr. Leslie, is desirous that I should marry the charming Sir Charles Sefton, whose heart is so devoted to you; but we neither of us like one another: well! my brother had taken upon himself the delightful task of watching us both that night; and therefore, Sir Charles, at my intreaties, never once looked towards you.” “Well, I don’t know how it is; but I must say, I did rather like him,” said the imprudent Margaret, who knew not the artifice of her ladyship; “but I thought he was afraid of Mrs. Kennedy; he told me once she was a ——.” “She is,” interrupted Lady Isabella, “the dearest creature in the world!” For Lady Isabella knew not that Sir Charles had carried his *quizzing* powers so far, as to persuade Margaret into a belief of Mrs. Kennedy being skilled in the *black art*—and Lady Isabella often found her that safe confidential friend, who, while she patiently endured all her sarcasms, would also, while she concealed the many improper secrets Lady Isabella confided to her, be not only silent, but as far as lay in her power, assisting likewise: thus, though Lady Isabella inwardly despised the pliability of her principles, ridiculed her person, and some of her flights of imagination in her writings, yet she ever pretended for her the most kind and disinterested friendship.

“Pray, my lady,” said the pondering Margaret, “who did she mean by the *rich gentleman, older than myself*, who would have evil designs upon me?” “Not Sir Charles, you may be certain,” replied Lady Isabella; “he loves you too well to injure you in the smallest degree: no, he, I am sure, will study nothing but your happiness: though I do not implicitly believe all that Mrs. Kennedy may tell with the cards, yet sometimes, I assure you, she *does* hit *right*; but then, I believe, that is all by mere chance! and what, indeed, is it but *chance* that governs our destiny?”

Lady Isabella now perceiving that she had impressed Margaret with every idea she could wish respecting Sir Charles, proposed returning to the house, promising to send her the books as soon as she arrived at the parsonage.

It may be easily seen, that from taking an improper bent, the refined understanding of Lady Isabella was perverted to the worst of purposes, and the pernicious works she perused, the ill example of her nearest relatives, and a naturally mischievous disposition, all combined to corrupt her heart, and render her careless of future consequences, so as she could but achieve her desired pursuit. That heart had a degree of warmth which made love requisite to the happiness of her existence; she had loved Major Raymond, but she never had regarded any man with that degree of partiality which she felt for Frederic Harrington. Her penetration was most quick and acute; she saw, after the last visit of the farm-house family to the parsonage, that the heart of Frederic was lost to her for ever; she had suspected it, at the preceding visit, but she hoped, if it had only strayed from her, she should yet be able to recover it: now, her wounded pride made her fixed in the resolution

to spurn him from her, even if she saw him sighing at her feet in despair.

She was resolved in private to give Raymond every hope; while in public she must affect to receive the addresses of Sir Charles Sefton with pleasure and satisfaction; though she inwardly detested him, and put every art in practice to rid herself of a lover so very uncongenial to her taste.

She determined, if possible, to drive him into some kind of intrigue, which might take up his time and attention; and it will be thought strange that she should pitch upon Margaret for this manoeuvre: but she saw that the girl, if she took proper care of her person, was by no means disagreeable: she knew also that Sir Charles Sefton was a professed admirer of all the sex, and doted on variety, in whatever female form it appeared, that was not downright ugly and deformed; Margaret Marsham, four years younger than Lady Isabella, was just his favourite age, and a coral lip quite seduced him; such had Margaret.

The perfidious lady designed first to delude her mind with those seductive novels, whose chief subject is love, and that was generally produced by *beauty*; and these novels did not always make *marriage* the *finale* of the piece, but rather taught the young mind to lean to love *unrestrained* and *unlimited*—

“Love, free as air.”—

Lady Isabella, to aid her own plot, and gratify her revenge on the lovely Mary, for robbing her of the heart of Frederic, cared not one straw whether or no she was the ruin of a poor innocent credulous girl, or for any afflictions she might heap on her family: such, such alas! are the fatal principles which sway the mind of that being who gives herself up to the free indulgence of her inclinations; who makes use of a brilliant understanding, by daring to doubt an hereafter, flies in the face of her God, while she spurns decorum and every moral tie and obligation: pride, vanity, and revenge, throw in their baneful ingredients, and render a compound of all that is base and dishonourable.

Into these digressive reflections we are, perhaps, *too* often led, in the depicting characters, some of which, we are sorry to write it, are actually in existence—we acknowledge that we ought to leave it to the minds of our readers to make what comments they please, and which will present themselves differently to differing dispositions.

Lady Isabella, after some general and polite conversation with the worthy family of Eglantine Farm, walked home, accompanied by Frederic Harrington; he proved but a very stupid companion for her, and in vain he endeavoured to say something civil; she saw through it all, and regarded him only with contempt, though with such well-assumed indifference, that a less honest heart than Harrington's might have been deceived.

In about half an hour after her arrival at home, came a packet of novels to the farm-house, which, though of modern date, were not of that modern kind to lash at vice and strip it of its beauteous mask; no, they consisted of such as would delude the weak and unwary mind to dislike the formal ties of marriage, and, if so tied, to meditate adultery; to break through the prudent bands of parental restraint, and give up all to love, which so far from being branded by these seductive writers with the title of *illicit*, was

styled *virtuous*; though scoffing at the idea of nuptial chains, and confiding only in the honour of the betrayer.

Amongst these works was Madame de Staël's dangerous novel of *Delphine*; and also that no less dangerous work (unless when perused by a young female of uncommon purity and strength of mind), Rousseau's *Heloise*. Nor can we quite agree with that great man, when he says, "the heart of a female, who should be corrupted by that work, was *corrupt* before."

The expression is far too strong: youth is not the season for firmness; extreme prudence in the morning of life, is a virtue as unnatural as it is rare: the weak mind of an inexperienced country girl may be softened and easily warped, which never was wicked, or in any degree *corrupt*.

Margaret read these works with avidity; she laughed at, she ridiculed herself, and her former taste! but she languished for a congenial soul of the opposite sex, with whom she could experience the extatic raptures proceeding from the unrestrained and delightful union of hearts, where no vulgar "human tie" should render common their moments of superlative bliss!

Among other books, Lady Isabella lent her victim a few translations from the French, wherein she found the heroine generally a *married* woman; this served to strengthen her in the opinion of the invalidity and futility of the marriage-ceremony. She found every coquettish art was put in practice by these Gallic nymphs, to ensnare the hearts of men: Margaret, therefore, became more careful of her outward appearance; studied long before her glass each look that might be most becoming: she was cautious of opening her mouth, but smiled prettily, with her lips closed; her eyes were no longer rolled towards heaven, but taught to speak the languor of *earthly* love, or sometimes to leer with meaning and vivacity: it has before been observed, they were naturally good.

Her animation and the improvement of her personal appearance astonished her friends, for she was cunning enough to conceal, and study in private, the sources of her present transformation: as the morals of her once cherished romances were irreproachable and strict in the extreme, so her father never had forbidden their perusal; but she well knew how much her present readings condemned the pure principles he preached from the pulpit, and which actuated his private life.

Mary, though her colour faded, appeared yet more sweetly interesting than ever: Margaret's studies, wholly confined to the books she had borrowed from Lady Isabella, left the choice which the circulating library afforded entirely to Mary; who sent always for those novels whose subject was the softer passion; but then it was always *virtuous* love and its reward which they described. Poems, also, she read, whose delightful pensiveness suited the present turn of her mind; and it was the song of love alone which now breathed its notes from her harmonious voice.

## CHAP. XI.

## A SEPARATION AND A GRAND PLOT.

I forbid my tears: but yet  
It is our trick; Nature her custom holds,  
Let shame say what it will.

SHAKESPEARE.

—————These reside  
In courts, and do their works with bows and smiles;  
That little engin'ry, more mischievous  
Than fleets and armies.

YOUNG.

THE worthy Sir Edward Harrington had, from his first meeting with Charles Marsham, determined to exert all his influence and interest with the great, to procure for this excellent officer a lucrative and respectable situation.

An appointment of great trust and importance was, at length, at the baronet's intercession, bestowed upon him, and in which post he was to accompany the grand expedition. The news arrived to Charles as sudden and unexpected as it was gratifying and pleasing, and he hastened to join the fleet, which was daily expected to sail, and fill a situation for which he was, from both abilities and experience, so amply qualified.

The brothers at the farm-house had all of them a property, formerly belonging to a deceased sister, equally divided between them, in an annual income: this deed of gift was necessary to be perused and copied before their separation; a power of attorney was also to be made out, and which Ralph, though the eldest, with a kind of *presentiment* on his spirits, insisted on being given to his brother Edward.

These papers were the cause which occasioned their delay, in waiting on the noble guests who did them the honour of a morning visit previous to the week fixed for the departure of Charles. The sorrows of the hitherto cheerful Mary seemed now begun; she was the favourite of her uncle Charles, and, next to her father, she loved him.

He pressed her, at parting, to his heart; and gave her, with parental fondness, his blessing and advice, which sufficiently proved he had penetrated into the causes of the present change in her person and manners, while the last sentence he flatteringly pronounced, was, "Oh! my beloved Mary, guard your heart!"

More than thrice did the secret mount to her lips, but female bashfulness as often prevented its escaping them; she longed to confide her thoughts to her dear uncle, yet she suffered him to quit her, with the corroding secret of her heart yet unrevealed.

She looked anxiously at her window as he turned the corner of the lane which led into the London road, and saw the last flutter of his white handkerchief, as, with an half-averted head, he waved the signal towards her; and while she could distinguish the clattering sound made by the hoofs of his favourite mare, he did not yet appear as quite departed. The dead silence that ensued made her tears stream afresh, and though still

blessed with a kind uncle and a worthy and affectionate parent, she felt at that moment as if left alone in the world without a single friend.

She leaned her aching head against the little book-case which contained the instructive library her generous uncle had given her; kissed the lettered backs of some of the volumes, and gave herself up to all the indulgence of sorrow; for she well knew that each of the inhabitants of the farm, wholly occupied with their own regret and anxiety, could afford her but little comfort.

No one in Mr. Marsham's mansion could be more generally missed, nor could the absence of any one be more regretted, than that of Charles; his constant cheerfulness, his benevolent and truly humane heart, his easy address and fund of military anecdote, made his society always desirable, and the deprivation of it severely felt by his family. The servants had a pleasure in preventing his wishes; and his nieces were both emulous of performing for him every little office of kindness in their power: the shirts that were made for uncle Charles were worked at with more diligence and pleasure than for any one else; and they each would contend whose turn it was to twitch out the hair to mark C. M. on his cambric pocket-handkerchiefs or cravats.

A summons to tea took Mary from her library into the common parlour: her father and uncle remarked her red and swollen eyes, but they remarked only in silence; while uncle Ralph drew the tea-table with equal taciturnity towards her.

Margaret's grief was more violent, but Margaret was not now under the influence of an artificial character; she was herself, she was a Marsham; and her bosom was only warmed and animated by natural affections; her arms were crossed on a table, and she sobbed bitterly as she rested her face upon them.

Edward, after refusing the bread and butter which was handed to him, broke silence by saying, "I shall eagerly look at the ship-news in every newspaper that arrives." "And will you believe," said Ralph, drily, "any thing that *those vehicles of falsehood* may utter? especially when you must recollect how often they deceived us in the late Corunna business!"

"The nautical intelligence, as it comes from Lloyd's," said Edward, "is the only part which may be almost implicitly relied upon."

Ralph sipped his tea, and *nodded*, for he could not *articulate* an assent: the weight of his heart sunk like lead in his bosom; yet, unlike that ponderous metal, it rose to his throat, and seemed to choak the passage of utterance: his matter-of-fact character would not suffer him to let it be perceived that an heavy presage appeared to speak to his convicted mind, that he never should behold his much loved brother again.

They all retired early to rest; and for a few days, their several most favourite occupations lost their charms; but Charles wrote to one or other of them by every post, and the described happiness of his much ameliorated situation, the flow of high spirits which ran through his letters, made them participate in his felicity! though it cost them the sacrifice of his society.

In the mean time, the plotting Lady Isabella was not idle; Sir Charles, through her artful persuasions and pretended love of quizzing, had had two or three stolen interviews with Margaret: the false character of a girl from the country had often been imposed upon him in town, in his purchased amours; here he found it in its true, its native simplicity and credulity: Margaret's youth and virgin innocence were sufficient to please the taste of the

moment in this depraved libertine; he harboured against the unsuspecting girl the basest designs; and while he laid his iniquitous plans to effect her ruin, he meant his short-lived attachment to her to be as transitory and fleeting as the passion with which she had inspired him; their sudden separation as momentary as the first impulse which urged him to attempt her seduction! and as totally oblivious, on *his* part, as it might be agonising on *hers*.

Raymond, young, thoughtless, and insinuating, was now again reinstated in the heart of Lady Isabella: Sir Charles was engaged with his new intrigue as deeply as her ladyship could wish; so that he had neither time nor inclination to watch her movements.

Every plan was laid by Lady Isabella and her lover for a trip to Gretna Green, where the enamoured Raymond was to receive her vows for life, under the sanction of the hymeneal Vulcan of that celebrated place for stolen weddings: but how to compass this northern tour was the most difficult! for Lady Isabella had not been so circumspect, but that her brother and sister began strongly to suspect that her tenderness for Major Raymond was again revived: the Major's visits, also, became so frequent, as to draw on him cool and averted looks, peevish contradictions, and distant and unrepeatd invitations to stay dinner or supper, when he might chance to call near the hours of either.

The Rector and his lady always slept in separate apartments; Lady Caroline had experienced of late very sleepless nights, could not rest alone, she must have her dear Isabel with her; so that Isabella began to fear it would be impossible to effect her escape from the country; and she knew it would be impracticable for the Major to obtain leave of absence for such a length of time, which might enable him, on their removal from Eglantine, to watch the different occasions which might offer, of carrying off his divinity without molestation.

In the perplexity of her mind, one morning, as Lady Isabella lay ruminating on her pillow, a golden thought on a sudden struck her;—she rose, and repairing to the study, she sent for Sir Charles Sefton's servant, to request from her his master to rise, and take a walk with her on the lawn, as the morning was uncommonly beautiful.

Sir Charles, ever joyful to obey the wishes of the object of his adoration, rose immediately; but was surprised to see a thick and cloudy atmosphere, and a morning very far from a pleasant one; however, if his beloved chose to call winter summer, or to call a thick fog beautifully clear, it was his duty to acquiesce.

“My dear Charles,” said she, extending her delicate hand as he entered, while the sentence thrilled to his soul; “I hope I have not interrupted any pleasant visions; but I want to have a little conversation with you; and I am about to require your assistance in a matter which, I assure you, interests my wishes so much, that I have been unable to sleep the whole night.”

“Believe me,” said the enamoured Baronet, while he *endeavoured* to look all that was tender and captivating, “that I feel blessed beyond conception, that it is in my power to afford any assistance to the wishes of Lady Isabella Emerson; and believe me, most adorable of women, that not only my person and fortune, but my life is at her disposal.”—“Oh! it is not a boon so precious as *your* existence which I have to beg,” said the bewitching Isabella, with the smile of an Hebé, “no; but you know my brother-in-law consents to every thing which you propose; and I wish you to exert your influence with him, to let us, before we quit this place, have a *masquerade* on the lawn!”



“Indeed, Lady Isabella,” said Sir Charles, in a tone of tender reproach, “Mr. Harrington was the person to have influence over Mr. Leslie; mine, I must say, in this family, appears to be lost!”

“Well! but you know,” said she, affecting not to understand him, “he is not here, or I certainly would have applied to *him* rather than to *you*.”—“Would you?” replied the Baronet, with a desponding look.—“Assuredly,” said she, “from the very unaccountable influence, my *dearest* fellow, which he had over my brother and sister.”

Lady Isabella’s art, in this morning’s adventure, shone conspicuous: she had appointed the study as the place of assignation with Sir Charles; she knew her brother’s hour of rising, and she knew also, that now that hour was just on the point of striking; and he generally repaired to his library and studied half an hour, or more, before breakfast. Her *deshabille* was negligently elegant; a stray ringlet or two were suffered to sport from beneath the pale blue Turkish turban, which confined her luxuriance of hair: she threw herself in a careless attitude, half lying, half sitting, on a purple satin library-sofa; and while she raised her delicate fingers to play sportingly on the *candelabra* which stood beside it, the snowy whiteness of her hand appeared dazzling: an angle of the finest symmetry, and well-formed little foot, derived new beauty from the soft kid morning boot which embraced it.

Sir Charles longed for the period when he could shew off such a goddess of beauty and fashion, as his own, and when he could read in every morning print the notoriety of the dashing and lovely Lady Isabella Sefton!

Enraptured at the thought, and seeing an object before him that would have imparted extasy to the most cynical and apathetic, he fell on his knees, seized the hand which hung by her side, and pressed it with ardour to his lips and heart; entreating her to name the happy day, when he might call her his.

The softness of her consenting looks, accompanied with a gentle sigh, made Sir Charles easily conceive that he might *himself* name the day, without any opposition on the part of her ladyship: “Whatever day you please,” said she, hiding her face, “in the fortnight after our departure from this place.”—“Cruel Isabella,” said he, “why so long delay my happiness?”—“Oh! now,” said she, with the most childish and affected modesty, “you take advantage of my partiality for you: we will say, in a week then after we leave Eglantine.

The Baronet then insisted she should seal this promise with her lovely lips; and at that moment, to the great satisfaction of her plotting ladyship, at that tender interval, her reverend brother-in-law entered his study!

With well-acted confusion, rose from the sofa and stood before him, the apparently trembling Isabella. Sir Charles smiled, and said, “Oh! sir, your divine sister has at length consented to name the period when she will bless me with her hand!”

“These raptures, sir,” said the Rector, endeavouring to look grave, while satisfaction beamed from his eyes, “are very unbecoming in people of rank and fashion; Lady Isabella Emerson is intitled to more respect; she is not yet, Sir Charles, your wife; and the situation I found my sister in on the sofa, is very improper indeed for a woman of her quality. I am happy, certainly, that she is sensible of the worth of a husband, such as you will make her; but I must, in my house, beg more decorum of manners, while she is yet in her single state.”

Lady Isabella retired in well-feigned confusion, inwardly rejoicing that her plan had succeeded so far; and more disgusted with, and hating Sir Charles Sefton worse than ever; who now, sure of her ladyship, plotted the carrying on his *subaltern* amour, as he styled it to his confidential servant, with the little ugly *grisette*, Marsham!

When he had sufficiently wrought on the pliability of this credulous girl's mind, it was his intention to carry her off, and pretend to the Leslies some urgent business in London: the masquerade, however, if he could but get that to bear, would render such a step unnecessary, for the disguises and opportunities of this species of entertainment would easily effect an *elopement*; and the same important business was in agitation, and intended to be effected by Major Raymond and Lady Isabella; for she felt certain that Mr. Leslie, secure in her attachment to Sir Charles Sefton, would invite the Major; if not, he could come disguised: he would not be distinguished in the throng, and she should neither be watched, nor in any degree suspected.

They assembled at a late hour to breakfast. Lady Isabella, generally all life and chat, took her chocolate in silence; the Rector was all good-humour, and wished to encourage the *modesty* of his lovely sister-in-law to look up and smile; Sir Charles was rapture too *visible* to be *sincerely* heartfelt; Mrs. Kennedy kept feeding the pug-dog.

Lady Caroline, with the MORNING POST in her hand, looked off from the perusal of fashionable intelligence, to ask what was the matter with them all! *Her* Theodore described and explained the study scene, and again looked grave. "And what of that?" said Lady Caroline, with all the unblushing effrontery of fashion; "Why, my dear Isabella, you blush, and look as ridiculously bashful about it, as an awkward country girl! It gives me, however, really, sincere pleasure to hear that you have at last consented to name the time, when you will make this worthy gentleman happy;" and giving a meaning look to her husband, as she concluded her speech, and which he appeared perfectly well to understand, the breakfast was dispatched in haste, and taking her sister by the arm, they left the Baronet and the reverend gentleman together.

"It looks d—lish odd, I must say, my dear fellow," began Mr. Leslie; "but I had, this morning, a bill come in for above two hundred pounds, and till my next rents become due, it will be very inconvenient for me to pay it: I would willingly have given my bond for the payment of it, at that time, but the fellow insists on having his money *immediately*. If you could oblige me with the loan of three hundred pounds, I should esteem it a singular favour? and I will give you a power to receive that sum when my next rents become due."—The Baronet was *silent*!

The Reverend Theodore Leslie had never before asked to borrow any sum of Sir Charles Sefton: reflection, with the rapidity of lightning, darted through his mind. "How," thought he, "did Sir Charles continue always so wealthy, giving, as he did, in to every species of fashionable expence and amusement, unless he was very close indeed in many other respects? But yet he had never seemed to care much about money; and though Lady Isabella had a fortune, he appeared very willing to take her without any!"

The Baronet's busy mind also underwent a quick succession of ideas; he did not like to lend money, neither to give it away, unless to put in practice some very favourite pursuit: but, to please his future lady, to obtain the masquerade he had promised her, if possible, and the power this loan might give him over the Leslies, to do as he pleased; to

make their house his home, and invite thereto whoever he might think proper: all these circumstances made him feign a generosity he by no means felt.

“Well, my dear friend,” said he, after a long, and to Mr. Leslie, a puzzling and painful pause,—“and is this really all the mighty favour you have to ask of me? Be assured, double that sum is yours, at pleasure.”

He then hastened to his writing-desk, and gave a bill on his banker, to be paid at sight; but he did not *double* the sum, nor did he forget to take the proffered bond.

However, with all his shallow principles, he knew it would be the height of indelicacy, at that moment, to ask a favour in return; and reserved the masquerade scheme till after dinner, when the cloth and servants should be withdrawn.

In answer to his then strenuously urged request, the Reverend Theodore Leslie said, “My dear Sir Charles, I have but one objection, that is the prejudice of the country people: you well know, I am sure, and will acknowledge, that I have no aversion to any one fashionable amusement in the world, *au contraire*, and many is the masquerade in town that I have accompanied *you* to: but to have such a *divertisement* at the parsonage, I fear will be inadmissible; nor can we accomplish it, I am sure, without giving offence to these votaries of the *old school*; and it will cast a stigma on my professional character that I know not how I should wipe off. Now there is Edward Marsham, for instance, my curate; why, I suppose nothing on earth would make him bring his family to such an entertainment! and I declare the good folks at the farm-house are the most decent people in this place: I do not like to have a party without them; and that girl, Mary Marsham, is an ornament to any circle, and indeed the other improves very much of late.”

Lady Caroline turned up her lip with a contemptuous sneer. “Oh!” said Lady Isabella, “as to my little sensible Margaret, I quite *love* her!”—“And so do I, *most passionately*,” said the Baronet, half *quizzing*, half serious, as he watched the looks of his Isabella, who, though inwardly pleased, pouted and affected to be jealous.

Lady Caroline, who had seen much of his pointed attentions lately to Margaret, eyed him with an archness which rather disconcerted him; but the *badinante* gaiety of her tone relieved him, as she said,—“Now are you not a very pretty fellow, and likely to make a most fashionable husband, since the time you only *expect* to obtain the title, you talk of loving another *passionately*! Oh! I glory in such a charming disciple of the *New School*.”

Lady Caroline’s spirits were uncommonly buoyant since the morning loan; she had also won a considerable bet on the exact colour of a horse, with a young fox-hunter who had called just before dinner; she caused general mirth by some of her sprightly sallies, given with all the originality and dash of the *haut ton*.

The indefatigable Sir Charles again reverted to the subject of the masquerade. “I have hit upon an expedient,” said Mrs. Kennedy; “when I was in Ireland, we often used to have fancy-balls: suppose Lady Caroline proposes to give such an entertainment! and every one invited to it be requested to appear in character; you will thus avoid the stupid throng of dominos; and instead of dancing on the lawn, let them dance in the ball-room, where, when they are all assembled and ready to begin dancing, let Lady Caroline or Lady Isabella propose some little change of disguises and present the company with masks.”—“You are a dear creature, Kennedy,” said Lady Isabella; “and therefore, dear brother,” continued she, turning her persuasive and bewitching countenance full upon him, “let us

finish with this *unique* affair, as, by the week after, we shall most probably have quitted this place; and, as this is but Tuesday, if we have it the latter end of next week, we shall have time to collect a tolerable set, and to send to London for masks and many other charming and requisite *et-ceteras*; which we must all be secret about, for I would not be without the Marshams' family for the universe."

"I am sorry the Lieutenant is gone," said Mr. Leslie; "there was a great deal of originality and spirit about that fellow; I liked him much: but Sir Charles and Lady Isabella were very glad he *was* gone: Lady Isabella, though she liked him, feared him more; and Sir Charles knew he could better impose on the unsuspecting virtue of Edward, and the simplicity of honest Ralph, than on the mind of a man who had mixed so much in the world as Charles Marsham; whose high sense of honour would not tamely suffer any insult offered to his family, nor endure the wrongs of a seduced niece with patience or impunity."

The plan adopted by Mrs. Kennedy was highly relished by the whole society: the Rector gave his now unreluctant consent; and Mrs. Kennedy's tasteful talents were immediately put in requisition: the decorations and the whole style of the entertainment were to be under her direction; and she was engaged every evening and morning in penning sonnets and hand-bills to accord with each different character, and which shewed how prolific were her ideas and how versatile her talents.

## CHAP. XII.

A MASQUERADE, A DISAPPOINTMENT, AND  
A SURPRISE.

A combination and a form indeed!  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man.

SHAKESPEARE.

She thrice essay'd to speak; her accents hung,  
And, fault'ring, dy'd unfinished' on her tongue,  
Or vanish'd into sighs.

DRYDEN.

ON the day appointed in the following week, Mary Marsham, in the habit of a flower-girl, and Margaret as an Arcadian shepherdess, attended by their father and uncle, repaired to the parsonage, in order to be present at the fancy-ball given as a farewell *fête* to all his genteel parishioners by the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie. Mr. Rouveau and Mrs. Edmonds, on this occasion, received cards of invitation; but being gone to London on business, it was unknown whether that was really the cause of their absence, or whether, not having been invited to any of the Rector's private parties, or their own dwelling never having been *honoured* by a visit from Lady Caroline, they scorned to accept this public desire of filling up and adding variety to the motley group.

Mrs. Susanna Bradbury, however, to please her dear niece, Lady Ringwood, resumed all the graceful ease, good-nature, and politeness she had hitherto shewn in the Rector's elegant parties, and with a cordiality and pleasantry, as if she had never been neglected, made her appearance again at the parsonage.

Sir Edward Harrington, not to appear fastidious, or too immediately to give up his connexion with this family after the departure of his nephew, accepted the invitation, and with that usual affability which made him a welcome guest wherever he appeared, arrived at the rectory the preceding evening, after dispatching a letter to his dear nephew, who was detained at Ramsgate with his regiment, waiting, not only for a fair wind, but for a fresh embarkation of troops before they sailed.

The Rector and his Curate departed not from their professional character, but attended merely as lookers-on at this elegant and *unique* species of entertainment. Lady Caroline Leslie appeared as the Goddess of Chance, with a dice-box in one hand, which she shook, as a challenge to all those who chose to enlist under her standard; while she waved a flag gracefully with the other hand towards a door, which opened into a card-room brilliantly lighted up and filled with tables for cards and other games of hazard. The flag her ladyship held, which was painted on India silk by the ingenious Mrs. Kennedy, displayed, on a rose-coloured ground, a scattered pack of cards, and at each corner bags overflowing with guineas, with this motto:—"He who fears to venture, must never hope to gain." Her ladyship, however, gained but few volunteers.

Lady Isabella appeared in the dress of a pilgrim; Sir Charles Sefton as a Turk, in a very splendid habit, and looked uncommonly well; Major Raymond a friar.

Sir Edward Harrington, who was in the masquerade secret, being no dancer, declined appearing in any fancy dress till after the dancing began: Mrs. Kennedy looked characteristic as a Norwood gipsy; and Lady Wringham, as the renowned Queen of Egypt, made a very comely and very richly dressed Cleopatra, but she moved alone, and told the Rector she thought he might as well dress himself and appear as her *Tantony*.

Mrs. Susanna Bradbury looked and performed the character of the Virgin-Queen Elizabeth, to admiration; the only fault that was found with her appearance was, that she looked much too handsome for this female glory of Great Britain. Lucy Ringwood, as a novice of St. Dominick, looked most bewitching and lovely: she took up the Rector's sole attention till the arrival of a minstrel in the evening, who never quitted her till the hour of supper, when he refused to unmask, and left the brilliant party wondering who he was.

The guests who were expected from London, and my lady's quality friends in the country, in the environs of Eglantine, were all previously told to come disguised and in masks. With well-feigned astonishment, Lady Isabella beheld the servants bringing in a large deal packing-case, addressed "to the Right Honourable Lady Caroline Leslie, to be opened in the presence of herself and party assembled for the fancy-ball." The servants were then ordered to open it, and on the top lay the following note, which Lady Caroline read aloud.

"My dear Caroline,

"As you did me the favour of inviting me to your fancy-ball, '*know, by these presents,*' that I will most certainly accept the invitation, and I shall bring with me a party of friends at eleven o'clock, so completely disguised, that it will puzzle all your wise heads put together, to find us out; I must therefore beg your party to wear what I have sent; for I see no wit or spirit in a fancy-ball, unless the face is covered. Love to Isabel and your reverend husband.

"Your's, affectionately,

"SOPHIA LESLIE."

"From the Marchioness, I declare," said Lady Caroline, while Lady Isabella and the party thronging round her, were examining the masks. "What must we do?" added Lady Caroline, turning to her husband. "Do," repeated he, "why, of course, the dancers must wear them: not that I much approve of it; but now there is no alternative; it is too late to answer her ladyship's letter; besides, if we did not act as she requests, it might cause offence, which we must be very careful of giving there; and it would look also just as if we did not wish her or her party to come; which would infallibly ruin us with the Marquis, for he does so doat on his wife."

Now it was well known to most of the company, and to the world in general, that though the Marquis did *so doat on his wife*,\* that he kept a mistress, in great splendour, and who absolutely governed his lordship with the most arbitrary and despotic sway; and that, to give five hundred guineas for a pair of bracelets\* to encircle the wrists of this Sultana, was thought by him a mere trifle.

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\**Historique.*

“I could wish, sir,” said Edward Marsham, “if you will pardon me, that my girls should—” “My dear fellow,” said Mr. Leslie, quickly interrupting him, “do not be uneasy, it is a mere frolic of the Marchioness of Leslie: it is only for an hour or two, every one will unmask at supper, and then we shall all laugh at each other; neither you nor I, my dear friend, will cover our faces at all: it is only the dancers and the young folks; come, come; mirth and good humour are the order of the evening.”

No one, after this, could be fastidious enough to make an objection to what appeared so reasonable: Lady Wringham alone, who had been highly complimented by the Rector, was long obstinate; and, pouting, she declared it was quite *scandalous* to hide *people's beauty* under such nasty, ugly, painted things! “My dear madam,” said Lady Isabella, “it will only heighten yours; and when you unmask at supper, you will astonish every one with the wonderful *comparison!*”—“*Comparisments*, my lady,” she replied, “are *odorous*; and I am sure I *ar'nt* a bit like that red-brown broad face which Lady Caroline has picked out for me.”

“Excuse me, Lady Wringham,” said Lady Caroline, “now you surely must recollect that you are personating an Egyptian Queen! and do you think she was as fair as our unripened beauties of the North?”

“Besides,” said Sir Charles Sefton, “I think a beautiful woman should always wear an ugly mask; it gains her so many admirers the moment she unmask, that the effect is rendered irresistible in the bosoms of all those who regard her.” “Well, well, *give us hold* of the mask,” said the polite lady, “I'll *e'en* put it on.” And immediately Lady Isabella, with playful freedom, said, “Now, I must insist on all you men-creatures quitting the room; for as this is so hung round with pier-glasses, it will be a better place for us to put on our masks, than to be running up stairs to our different dressing-rooms.”—“Well, I do declare, you are so *funny*, Lady Isabella,” said Lady Wringham; but never mind, I *has* got on mine.”

“Well, then,” said Lady Caroline, after receiving a look from her sister, “Come up stairs with me; and let us leave the girls to do as they please.” Lady Caroline little thought of the regret she was preparing for herself and her noble and reverend partner, by thus attending to those expressive looks of her sister, which she always so well understood.

Lady Isabella now having got rid of all whom she feared, and making the doors secure, prepared for a change of disguise with Margaret. “I wish you were a little taller,” said she, “but the dress I am in has been made so wide and full, that it will fit you, and the little difference of our height will not be perceived in the breadth of our figures: imitate my manner, my sweet girl, as much as possible, as I will yours, and it will cause fine diversion.”

Margaret was very willing to come into this scheme, which promised so much amusement; and retiring into a recess, they quickly changed habits, unperceived by the rest of the female party, who were all occupied in choosing their masks.

In the mean time, Lady Isabella had caused the friar, Major Raymond, to change dresses with the Turk, Sir Charles Sefton; who, not having the smallest suspicion of what was going forward, or, indeed, that she now loved any one upon earth but his own dear self, readily came into the plot, as it would facilitate his elopement with Margaret; whom, as her ladyship in the pilgrim's disguise, he could very well pay unremitted attention to; and as a few days was all he wished for to carry on his iniquitous commerce with the

unhappy victim of his libertinism, he rejoiced in the scheme of Lady Isabella, who laughed inwardly at the success of her plans.

Proud of her confidence, he retired with Major Raymond to a summer-house at the bottom of the garden, where they mutually exchanged their disguises, after the Major had made some strong objections, as had been before preconcerted between him and her ladyship.

And now all the wit and small-talk of a masquerade enlivened the present gay assembly, which soon became crowded with masks in various characters: the transformed Raymond, from a friar to a Turk, took particular notice of the pretty shepherdess; while the Friar Sefton was very busy in extorting confession from the female pilgrim, to whom, when he declared he knew her, notwithstanding her disguise, he imparted in private the metamorphosis he had undergone. Lady Isabella confided also to her brother and sister the change *she* had made with Margaret; but took special care not to mention that which she had effected between her lovers; and thus *they* exulted in the unremitting attention paid to her by the well-made Sultan of the East.

Just before supper, entered two new characters in masks, whom none of the party were able to recognize, either by voice, figure, or manners: he, who seemed the youngest, was possessed of a fine and elegant form, which appeared to every advantage in the dress of a German hussar; the other was in that of a Highland chief, with a pair of boots of a very foreign make, with enormous long gold spurs: he strutted about in these boots, and afforded much diversion\*; boasting that they were the boots and spurs of General Le Febvre, taken prisoner by the English in the last winter's Spanish campaign. The Hussar, with a *badinage* which was pointedly half serious, expressed with all the native high sense of pride peculiar to his country, his indignation at the idea of wearing\* another man's boots! The Chieftian, however, whether to render the action absurd, or actually making a boast of these leathern achievements, vauntingly told all the company that they were really and *bona fide* General Le Febvre's boots which then covered his legs. At length a warm dispute took place at the side-board, between the Highland Chief and the German Officer, over two or three tumblers of champaign, about which regiment it was that took the French general prisoner! The Highlander positively declared he was taken by the Prince's regiment, while the Hussar contended, and indeed with unquestionable veracity, by all those who saw the action, that it was a\* private hussar belonging to the King's German Legion, who first took him, and turned him over to the care of another soldier belonging to a different regiment, while he continued *his* services in the field of combat.

The contest grew so warm, that the Chief challenged the Hussar immediately to retire and settle it in that way conformable to the laws of honour. In vain the party interposed; the indignant officers haughtily bade good-night to the gay assembly, who, with all the indifference of fashion, continued their amusement; except that part of the company whose feelings and principles were not extinguished by the fatal contagion of the goddess Dissipation, who builds her temple close by that of Vice.

A faint sickness, which she could not account for, came over the feeling and compassionate Mary; in vain she endeavoured to persuade herself that it was only

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*



common humanity for a fellow-creature; why then did she not feel equally as keenly awake to the safety of the Highland Chief? No, a nearer and more lively interest seemed kindling in her bosom towards his companion: she shuddered at, and severely condemned the inconstancy of her nature, which made her, in the intoxicating pleasures of that evening, forget that such a being as Frederic Harrington existed; and now, when she did think of him, it was only to draw a comparison to his disadvantage, with the accomplished stranger.

The Hussar Officer had attended to no female but her during the whole time he remained there; and those attentions were pointed and unremitting: the polished elegance of his manners, his fine martial form, his interesting foreign accent, which rather embellished the graces of his speech than destroyed them, made an impression on Mary, which, whatever soft sentiment she might have before felt for Harrington, seemed new to her bosom and more delightful.

Lady Caroline observing, as she seated herself in a retired seat, the evident perturbation she was in, kindly led her from the company, and gave her some refreshment in a small anti-room, which appeared to revive her. Mrs. Kennedy joined them: "You have too much sensibility, my dear girl," said that lady, as she presented her *vinaigrette* to Mary; "the gentlemen are only both flushed with champaign, they are convinced of it themselves, and have only retired from the company, which they knew they were unfit for: to-morrow, be assured, they will be more cool, and think nothing of it. Pray, do you know them, that you are so alarmed?"—"Oh! no, madam, I assure you," said Mary, with that uncommon energy which made the penetrating Mrs. Kennedy rather suspect that she did: but she added, "Come, come, we are all so happy; do not spoil the mirth and good order of the evening by such uncommon agitation about strangers; your father is not present, and your uncle is anxious about you: rally, and recover spirits."

"Good heavens!" said Lady Caroline, "why surely, child, the sparring of two men half intoxicated cannot have affected you in this manner: you say you know nothing of them, no more do I; and if they choose to take a pop at each other, what is that to you or me?"

Mary felt shocked at the unfeeling manner in which this lady of high fashion expressed herself; and she felt a renewed detestation of the manners of the age, which had so depraved a mind, in which she had just before seen, in the kind behaviour shewn to herself, an instance of the most tender attention and kindness. She re-entered the ball-room; but its wild and exuberant gaiety now seemed only to give her disgust; she could not again join in its festivities, but went and seated herself by her uncle. "Where is my father?" said she to him. "Gone," said Ralph, with a degree of blunt ill-humour, which shewed he was far from finding himself at home in this chequered midnight scene, "gone, if possible, to prevent murder!"

"Merciful heaven! my dear uncle," said the terrified girl, "explain yourself."

"Why, gone to prevent, if he can find them," replied Ralph, "those two *gingerbread* dressed, *belaced* figures, who represented officers, from destroying one another, if he can."

A ray of comfort now darted across the breast of Mary: she found from farther enquiry, that her father had followed them out; and she knew not the headstrong obstinacy of impetuous young men of fashion, but judged only from her own feelings,

that her father, in the mild and sweet accents of true religious language, would be able to speak persuasion and conviction to their minds, how heinous is the sin of committing deliberate murder, because enduring contradiction, or for differing in opinion.

Mary joined no more in the festive amusement of the night: Margaret, under the persuasive influence of her friar, was so well converted by him, as to consent to elope with him that very evening: the Turk and his shepherdess had long been missing, but with that no one troubled themselves; though Ralph had wondered for some time what could have become of his niece Margaret, whom he brought in his own hand to the parsonage, habited as a shepherdess: but Margaret was continually hopping about the room, in her pilgrim's disguise, and imitating Lady Isabella as well as she could, and which passed off very well with the unsuspecting multitude, who thought only that Lady Isabella was endeavouring to disguise *herself*.

Now tables, covered with every home and exotic rarity, and that in the most costly profusion, were elegantly laid out in different rooms; and various parties retired to supper at various times: Sir Charles Sefton and Lady Isabella Emerson were supposed to be in one of them: Ralph asked for his other niece, as he led Mary towards a supper-room; but he was commanded silence by the friar, who told him, he entirely destroyed the effect of the entertainment; for no one was to take cognizance of another as an acquaintance, till the whole company unmasked. Ralph, however, saw that the Rector had deceived him and his brother; for many took no supper, and refused to unmask at all; amongst whom was the pretended Lady Isabella, who walked with the friar round the tables, watching the opportunity of escaping, but who stayed enjoying the idea of how well she deceived her *rustic* uncle and the rest of the company; her vanity not a little flattered, that she should be taken for the elegantly formed Isabella.

Ralph seated himself beside his now unmasked and lovely flower-girl: the attending *beaux* thronged behind the chair of the blushing Mary, all emulous of administering to her wants at this hour of refreshment.

A necromancer, however, who had in the course of the evening told every one wonders, and the most wonderful intelligence for a fine lady to hear her *faults*, drove away the flutterers with his magic wand, and insisted solely on attending upon the charming Miss Marsham.

During supper, though Mary could not feel void of anxiety, nor though her spirits were not in any degree elevated, yet she experienced a kind of calm tranquillity, and a gentle and quiet languor succeeded to the agitation she had lately experienced.

Suddenly a note was brought, addressed to Sir Edward Harrington; but Sir Edward Harrington could not be found: another came to her uncle Ralph, and she read, as he held it to her, the following heart-rending words: "A fatal accident has happened, which renders it improper for my family to remain any longer at this unfortunate masked-ball: bring home my girls immediately: find out, if you can, Sir Edward Harrington, and bring him also with you.

EDWARD MARSHAM."

The necromancer was at the side-board when the note arrived: as he returned to the table with a glass of *lemonade* for Mary, he heard the emphatic enquiry of Ralph—for God's sake, to tell him, any one that could, which was Sir Edward Harrington; which

intreaty was answered by little else than peals of laughter at his energetic manner. "I am he," said the necromancer, throwing off his mask, and discovering his benign and handsome countenance. "God of heaven!" exclaimed he, on perusing his own billet, while the pallid hue which overspread his visage alarmed even the gayest of the fashionable throng. "Haste," added he, "dear Mr. Marsham, let us haste to the farm." But when Ralph turned to lead away Mary, she had fallen, unperceived, in the confusion this last scene gave rise to, from her seat to the floor, apparently lifeless.

Margaret, whose natural affections had not yet deserted her, whose deluded, though still innocent mind was not yet become that receptacle of depravity which Sir Charles Sefton and the intriguing Lady Isabella wished it should be, flew to her breathless sister, pressed her to her warm bosom, and to the general surprise, she sobbing exclaimed, "Oh! my sister, my sister, my beloved Mary, never, never can I leave you; look up, dear girl."

"Your sister!" said Ralph, as he administered some volatiles to Mary, and which caused her to open her eyes, "your sister! Do not I see Lady Isabella before me? and yet it is like the voice of Peggy."—"No, no, dear uncle," said she, though much vexed at the detestable name he always called her by, "Lady Isabella and I changed dresses;" and snatching off her mask, and throwing it from her with a degree of shame and vexation, she added, "as soon as my sister is able to move, let me accompany you home."

Sir Charles bit his lips with rage, cursed the sex in his heart, tore off his mask, and tossed down a copious bumper of burgundy.

And now amazement was painted on the countenances of the Rector and his lady: they had laughed at the surprise the discovery of Margaret's changed disguise had excited, and with which change they were acquainted before; but now the fatal *presentiment* of what had really happened, flashed conviction on their minds, that Lady Isabella had eloped with Major Raymond! for it was very long since any one had seen the shepherdess and the Turk, and they were no where to be found.

Lady Isabella's woman was ordered in, that she might be interrogated; but she was missing also: the lady's valuable jewels were likewise gone.

Sir Charles was in a state of disappointed vanity, bordering on distraction; which the Rector and his lady imagined proceeded from violent affection, and hoped it would be followed by a resolution to pursue the fugitives: but Sir Charles was resolved on no such thing; and the next morning, he very politely took his leave of the parsonage, nor troubled himself any more about Margaret, as she was an object he thought by no means worthy for him to attempt scaling her windows for, or to take the trouble of pursuing in various disguises; neither was this swain of St. James's-street at all inclined to those romantic adventures.

Mary, with her uncle, her sister, and Sir Edward Harrington, who preserved a solemn silence, only broken by agonised sighs, were conveyed home in the Rector's barouche: the afflicting and strange events of the evening, to which was added a considerable loss at the gaming-table, to Lady Caroline, entirely destroyed the gaiety of the scene, and the disappointed parties soon returned to their different homes.

Sir Edward and Ralph, on their arrival at the farm-house, immediately followed a servant up stairs. Mary, led by her sister, went, without scarce knowing where her feet carried her, to the common parlour; where the first object that presented itself to her sight,

was the Hussar Officer's jacket streaming with blood! Sickening at the sight, she sank, weeping, on her sister's bosom, who, equally affected at the sanguinary habit, was unable to afford her any consolation.

The poor girls sat in that pitiable situation for a few moments, when they were joined by their father: taking an hand of each, he said, in a voice almost unintelligible from sorrow, "Who was so unguarded, my dear ones, as to suffer you to enter this apartment? Retire to your chamber; these hours of dissipation require repose: and, oh! may this be the last time that my family are seen partakers of such midnight festivals! and which has proved so fatal to one of fashion's splendid votaries."

"Oh! tell us, my dear father," said Mary, "tell us what has happened? something dreadful, I am sure, to him who wore that habit," added she, pointing to the late glittering ornaments of the jacket, and which were now obscured by the crimson drops of life.

"Prepare your mind, my good girl," said he, "to meet every affliction sent by the Almighty, with fortitude and firmness! I am not ignorant of the partiality mutually felt by the nephew of Sir Edward Harrington and you for each other: he informed me of it before his departure; it was too quick and premature on *your* part, and impetuous and ill-judged on *his*: you are destined to move in an humble sphere; and now, heaven has doomed you to think no more of him as an inhabitant of this world: oh! my daughter, he who appeared in that dress, was Mr. Harrington!"

"How was that possible, sir?" said Mary; and now she felt that she loved no one but Frederic, whatever transitory predilection had shot across her heart: she felt shocked at the state of the Hussar, but she felt convinced in her own mind that her father was mistaken, as she heard that the expedition was to sail that morning; and she was sure it would be impossible for him to obtain leave to quit his regiment.

"Go," said Edward, "quietly to rest, and to-morrow I will inform you of all: I hasten to my dying charge! Sir Edward and I will sit up with him the remainder of the night, and wait the arrival of a surgeon of the first eminence from London, though I am sure he can do no more for him, since our friend, Mr. Alberry, assures me it is impossible for him to recover."

"Oh! then he yet lives," said Margaret, "and there may be hope."

"He lives," said Edward, "but it is scarcely probable he will live out to-morrow; the wound, dangerous in itself, is rendered yet more so from the apparent impossibility of extracting the ball. We talk too long; I again repeat my commands, that you both retire to rest. To-morrow I shall need your assistance, if the amiable young man should be alive; for I know, my girls, you are both excellent nurses. Go then, and reflect how much it behoves us to recruit our own strength, that we may exert it in the service of our fellow-creatures, who require our assistance: offer up the prayers of innocence, that our friend may bear his anguish patiently, and implore consolation for his afflicted relatives, and those to whom he was dear, who may survive him." Margaret hung down her head, and trembled at what she thought the penetrating look of her father, when she felt how artfully she had been acting, and how little *she* deserved the appellation of *innocent*: while Mary, with an heavy heart, but yet hoping it could not be *her* Frederic, only a relation of the Harringtons', who was reckoned extremely like him in person, retired to her chamber, but was very far from finding there repose; while a conflict of contending thoughts and sentiments, consisting partly of remorse, partly of disappointment, and once a little

portion of thankfulness that she *had* been so *disappointed*, kept Margaret from closing her eyes, as her aching head sought rest on her pillow.

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## CHAP. XIII.

## AN EXPLANATION.

Oh! that men should put an enemy in their mouths,  
to steal away their brains!

SHAKESPEARE.

A wise physician, skill'd our wounds to heal,  
Is more than armies to the public weal.

POPE'S HOMER.

IT was, indeed, but too true, that it was Frederic Harrington who now lay, to all appearance, in the agonies of death, at Mr. Marsham's farm-house. The desire of again seeing his beloved Mary once more before he sailed, the letter from his uncle, concerning the fatal masquerade, made him resolve to gratify, if possible.

To approach her in disguise, to assure himself of her constancy and affection towards him, urged this impetuous young man, whose passions and predilections were all hasty, and in the extreme, to make this rash attempt; and in order to effect his purpose, he requested to pass the day and sleep on shore.

The wind was unfavourable, and appeared likely to continue so; and as the commander in chief of the expedition was not expected to arrive till the third day after, his too indulgent commanding officer granted him the favour he requested.

Frederic Harrington had formerly contracted a friendship with a German officer of rank, and who happened to be quartered near the place of embarkation; and to avoid all the delays of procuring a habit, Harrington borrowed a complete equipment from him, which he knew would sufficiently disguise and ensure him from all suspicion; and taking post-horses, he stopped not till he arrived at an inn, a few miles distant from Eglantine; where he halted to equip and refresh himself.

As he was passing to the chamber to which he meant to change his dress, he saw the servant of a general officer with whom he was well acquainted, passing with some hurry to another apartment, while the well-known voice of the General struck his ear as he said, "Well, bring my things, that I may dress *immediately*; for if the only pair of horses, as they tell you, *are* engaged, by heaven, I must *walk* to the masquerade; for go I will."

Frederic was fearful of being known, yet he wished to oblige a friend; and therefore sent a billet to this effect:

"A gentleman who is going to Lady Caroline Leslie's masked-ball, has engaged the only horses left: very urgent reasons render him desirous of being concealed! If General Rainham will pardon the writer of this note waiting on him in a mask, he will feel himself happy to accommodate General R. with a seat in his chaise."

The General, who had also his private reasons for wishing to be concealed, who went only from curiosity, and to say he had been at a masquerade given by an ecclesiastic, a very rare *divertissement* at the houses of our clergy, since the days of the famous

Cardinal Wolsey, gladly accepted the offer, and returned for answer, “that he hoped to be favoured with the same indulgence of being equally an incognito from the shield of a mask to his polite escort.”

The winning Harrington soon made his haughty companion desirous of continuing the fellowship through the evening, and they seldom quitted each other, except in those moments when Frederic offered his homage to the idol of his fond regards; and it was not long before he found out the unobtruding Mary, amongst a crowd of fashionable insensibles and awkward imitators amongst the girls of fortune in the country.

In time, the perverse Frederic, well skilled in the knowledge of the female world, perceived the interest he had excited; and that interest he discovered was not felt for Frederic Harrington, but for one apparently a stranger and a foreigner! and Frederic began to be jealous of *himself*! For though he proved his own irresistibility, yet as Mary had no idea that it was really him, he fancied he plainly saw an inconstancy in her nature, which though he felt himself more in love with her than ever, made him shudder; for he had resolved, nor did he yet feel inclined to change his resolution, to make Mary his own, by the indissoluble ties of marriage.

The champaign at the side-board was exquisite; the General and he did ample credit to it: the heat of the room made them insensible of the *quantity* their thirst caused them to quaff; and the fatigue of Harrington’s journey, with the little sustenance he had taken, made the wine operate in that degree, which though not amounting to intoxication, yet shewed its heating effects in captious irascibility.

Not choosing to mix more than he could avoid with the company, the General was the person on whom he vented his ill-humour, and the altercation before mentioned took place, and which had been often previously debated by these two very contending parties in the St. James’s coffee-house, and in which Harrington knew he\* was correct in his information. General Rainham, however, equally convinced in his own mind, that *he* was right, and being equally flushed with wine, went out immediately with Frederic; and their travelling pistols being loaded, they retired to a meadow, belonging to Mr. Marsham, just as the

“Grey dawn began to dapple the east.”

Edward followed as quick as possible, but he was too late to prevent the fatal *rencontre*, and arrived only in time to see the Hussar fall, bleeding, with an heavy groan.

The combatants had not yet unmasked. The General took off his, and said, as his reason returned with the horrid effects of the dispute, “O God! who is it that I have killed?”

Edward uncovered the face of Frederic, but not yet, from the partial light of the opening morning, being able to distinguish his features, said, “Alas! sir, I know not; but whoever *you* are, fly, while flight is in your power; preserve your own life: and may length of years be given you for deep repentance, that you have shortened those of another!”

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

General Rainham, however, in all the uncurbed agony of grief, refused to abscond, until he had first brought a surgeon to this unhappy victim of fashionable punctilio.

Mr. Alberry, a man of humanity and whose secrecy might be relied on, was the *chief*, and almost the *only* practitioner in the village: he instantly obeyed the summons, and pronounced the wound to be fatal, and the utter impossibility of the patient surviving it many hours; and again exhorting, and then not in vain, the General to ensure his safety by flight.

Mr. Alberry, with the assistance of Edward Marsham, bore the unfortunate Frederic Harrington to the farm-house, where soon the agonized sight of Edward was convinced he saw in the wounded young man, the nephew of his brother Charles's best benefactor; and indeed the senses of Frederic not being yet fled, soon made him inform, in broken sentences, the anxious Curate who he was, and who, notwithstanding the bodily anguish he endured, yet ardently enquired which way was the wind? and bitterly sighed, at the idea of not being able to join his regiment.

The famous village surgeon and apothecary, Mr. Alberry, was a man of a warm and benevolent heart; and had his medical skill been proportionate to the excellent qualities of that seat of feeling, he would have been the first in his profession.

By practising in the Marshams' family from their infancy, he was a competent judge of their constitutions; he therefore never mistook complaints, which were in general very slight, and the volume of Buchan which lay in his parlour-window, always furnished him with proper remedies for the young people\*. Two chyrurgical operations, which he had performed, served to establish his fame, beyond a possibility of doubt, in the village; one was the amputation of a leg, the first he had performed, without the assistance of, or consultation with another surgeon: and though his lopping off that useful member happened to be premature, yet, as no one knew any thing about that, and the patient being a fine young man of three-and-twenty, possessed of an Herculean strength of constitution, the wonderful operation was spoken of with great admiration of the doctor's talents, all through the village and its environs. The next was on his own infant son, who had the misfortune to be born with a hare-lip: parental anxiety called forth all his energies, all his watchfulness: after he had closed it and fastened down the sides with the finest needles, he sat whole nights waking, with the child on his knees, to lull it to sleep, and prevent its cries from breaking the fragile and delicate closure; convinced that the care, patience, and anxiety of a parent alone, could keep the eyes from being closed in sleep for many succeeding nights.

The boy, cured of this defect, grew uncommonly handsome; and the fame of Mr. Alberry spread far and wide: what served to establish it more firmly with the Marshams, was his certain prognostics of Mrs. Edward Marsham's early death and consumptive habits, long before her friends had imagined her health to be in any way declining: not that the lady was at all consumptive, though naturally delicate; and a severe labour with her youngest daughter had been the sole cause of her demise in the bloom of her life.

This, however, made him a *croaking* doctor; and if he had not all the *skill*, he had a great deal of the *art* of his profession: he always appeared to apprehend his patients to be in imminent danger; and of which he found the good effects: if the sick person died, his judgment was undoubted; if he recovered, the greater were his medical powers.

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A ball he had never extracted in his life, and he was afraid now to venture: at any rate, he really felt assured in his own mind that the present patient must die from the effects of his wound alone, and therefore he would not attempt the extraction, but declared it was impossible that it *could* be extracted.

Sir Edward Harrington, however, instantly dispatched with all speed a message to one of the most eminent surgeons in London, and who had always attended his family, to hasten to Eglantine immediately.

After the above account of Mr. Alberry, the reader will, no doubt, entertain some hopes of Frederic Harrington's recovery; the wound in his shoulder was certainly a very bad one, but he was not *mortally* wounded, though the violent agitation of his mind, and the fatigue he had undergone, combined to bring on a fever, which would inevitably prove dangerous, without the strictest care and attention.

The agonies of Sir Edward's mind may be felt, but can neither be described, nor even conceived, except by those who might chance to be placed in a similar situation: the wind had changed, the commandant had joined, and the expedition had sailed! The accident which had happened to his nephew, prevented him, not only from distinguishing himself in the field of honour, but it would fix a stain on his military character, which, if he recovered, could never be thoroughly obliterated, from his being absent at such a momentous crisis, merely to enjoy the pleasures of a private masquerade; for he had yet to learn the state of his nephew's heart with regard to Mary; and even had he then known it, the impetuosity of impulsive feeling, and the want of government in the passions of his nephew, would have caused this truly parental uncle to be only the more offended at his conduct: but added to this, his wounded honour, was the bitterly afflicting idea of the danger of that life, in which his own might be said to be bound up. He was too ready, from his own anxious fears, to believe the ill report made by Mr. Alberry, and the dreadful idea that his Frederic would be snatched from him for ever, excluded all inclination for food or rest, till the arrival of the skilful and worthy Dr. Ch—dl—r from London.

This dispenser of the healing art, possesses, with the most unrivalled medical and chirurgical abilities, the most feeling and gentle heart; his manners are a sweet compound of mildness and tenderness, and his soothing and kindness equally restore the diseased to health, with his excellent prescriptions: he always urges, and alas! how few, like him, make it a matter of real importance—how requisite it is, that the *mind* should be at ease, to keep the *body* in continued sanity. His polite and gentle manners ameliorate the situation of the sick person at each of his visits. Accept, worthiest of thy profession, accept the humble and grateful tribute of praise offered to thee, by the author of this essay, who, for sixteen years since the time she first and last sought thy healing aid for a slow and undermining fever, has enjoyed an almost uninterrupted series of pure and regular health, that first of all earthly blessings. Unswayed by sordid interest, and only alive to the welfare of his fellow-creatures, this excellent man often refuses the golden fee, and visits only as the generous friend! His fortune is large, and he employs it in doing good: what pity that such a man should be childless!

All the present inmates of the farm-house rejoiced at his arrival; for he soon imparted hope, in regard to the wound, and extracted the ball without difficulty; but still expressed anxiety about the fever of his patient, which he could tell, by many incoherent

sentences that Frederic uttered during his deliriums, had been chiefly heightened by mental agitation. Mr. C—— therefore, told all who attended him, that to make his mind easy and tranquil, must be their most important care; and that they must grant him every indulgence his feelings might require: and observing, after a few visits, the smiling satisfaction of his patient, at the approach of Mary, and how readily and gratefully he took all that her hand administered, he requested that she might be his chief attendant.

If Frederic had never loved before, the tenderness of his Mary's attentions to him, the pallid hue of her anxious and interesting countenance, would have fixed him her captive. Sir Edward, yet unsuspecting of their mutual attachment, blessed her, as a ministering and health-dispensing angel: nor was the compassionate Margaret, in these kind instances, much less an object of his admiration.

The delicate-minded Dr. Ch——dl——r, often affected to consult with the country apothecary, about the state of the wounded Frederic, that his feelings might not be hurt, and gave him in private, in the sweetest and gentlest manner, many friendly hints of advice, which the good heart of Alberry felt peculiarly grateful for. Dr. C—— let him have also all the merit he could, in the increasing amendment of the patient: thus, though Alberry acknowledged every where, that none but a surgeon of the most consummate skill and courage would have dared to have been so desperate as to have extracted the ball, which was one of those remedies he was not fond of, namely, *kill or cure*; and indeed, his medicines (for Dr. C—— ordered them all from his shop) had done wonders, in saving a man who stood on the very threshold of the grave!—thus the medical fame of Mr. Alberry was established at Eglantine on surer grounds than ever.

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## CHAP. XIV.

## WEDDINGS.

These violent delights have violent ends,  
 And in their triumph die; the sweetest honey  
 Is loathsome, in its own deliciousness, and  
 In the taste, confounds the appetite: therefore  
 Love moderately; long love doth so;  
 Too swift arrives as tardy, as too slow.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE these events were passing at Eglantine, Lady Isabella Emerson and Major Raymond were so far advanced on their northern journey, that it was easily conceived all attempts to pursue them would be vain; and it was *equally* vain to urge, in the most strenuous manner, Sir Charles Sefton, whose large fortune could support the expence of extraordinary speed in the pursuit, to follow and prevent this ill-placed marriage; in vain they told him that it was only the rash haste of their sister's temper, in some jealous *pique*, and that they were sure she loved no one but their dear Sir Charles Sefton: no, Sir Charles assured them, with much *sang-froid*, that since Lady Isabella had evinced her affection for another, and had made use of himself only as a tool to accomplish her purpose, no power on earth should compel him to wed such a woman, and he was resolved to think no more of her. He then hastened to quit the acquaintance of the Leslies as fast as possible, though if he ever after met them in parties of fashion, he has always affected to be very glad to see them, and deplore the misfortune of not meeting them oftener; and even Lady Isabella he could have seen with all the *nonchalance* of a man of the world, as if she never had been in idea the mistress of his once most *ardent* affections.

Mr. Leslie made a violent bustle, and a show of pursuit; but which ended in a quick return, and a declaration that they had taken a different *route*, and that now it was impossible to trace them.

The village had ample food for conversation, at all the tea and whist parties in the vicinity: Lady Wringham, her husband, and those she could trust, said she always thought Lady Isabella a proud, *forward puss*; though in some companies she would, like Mrs. Candour, draw up her head, and "say nothing." But at *every* party was canvassed over Lady Isabella Emerson's elopement, and Mr. Harrington's duel, with they wondered who! Various were their conjectures of the unknown person, who had taken himself off, no one could tell whither: no doubt but the Curate knew who he was that wounded Mr. Harrington; only he was always so cautious of mentioning names: but the Curate did *not* know; and the truly honourable Frederic Harrington would tell no one; no, not even his uncle.

The scandal also of having a masquerade at a *clergyman's*, was inveighed against; and that most by those who had most enjoyed the entertainment. Lady Caroline, having no one *now* to *pidgeon*, passed her hours of discontented leisure in acrimonious speeches and remarks to Mrs. Kennedy; which though that lady found convenient to bear with for a

time, so that she might be able to take a journey in the barouche in style, and free of expence, yet she resolved, when they removed from Eglantine, to *remove herself* to where she might be treated with a little more politeness. The Rector again talked nonsense to Lucy Ringwood, for Mary Marsham was inaccessible. Fashionable cards of enquiry and condolence arrived every day from the parsonage to Sir Edward Harrington; and in a few days, the Honourable and Reverend Theodore Leslie left the care of the living to his worthy Curate: before those few days were expired, Major Raymond received the hand of his beautiful and dashing Isabella.

They hastened back as fast as post-horses could carry them, to Mr. Leslie's rectory near London, to throw themselves on the mercy of Lady Isabella's relations: *she* was received with forgiveness, and some portion of kindness; but the Rector and his lady peremptorily refused to see Major Raymond. "Pay me, then, the residue of my fortune, sir," said the spirited lady, "which I suffered, when I became of age, to lie in your hands; the Major and myself were *both* of age when we married, and you cannot withhold it from me: nothing but the tedious delays of the commons in granting licences, and my being so persecuted with that odious lover of your choosing, the detestable, or as he thinks himself *delectable*, Sir Charles Sefton, forced me away; otherwise I need not have taken a fatiguing and expensive journey, but have been married at home; but I liked the frolic of it, and was made a wife also by the church of England as I returned from Scotland, the honest clerk giving me away, and his daughter making her mark, poor girl, as a witness, because she could not write her name. So now, my good brother and sister, you have the whole history of Isabella Emerson's marriage, now Lady Isabella Raymond. All I have now to add, is, that I expect prompt payment of the remainder of my fortune; it will support me for a little while, as the most dashing officer's wife in Raymond's regiment: after that, let come what will; a short life and a merry one, is my maxim; and when life is no longer a scene of pleasure, but, on the contrary, replete only with trouble and pecuniary difficulties, it is easily laid down." She then, with much haughty indignation, wished them a good morning, telling the Rector to leave the money for her with her banker; for in whatever house her Raymond was not allowed to accompany her, never would she enter again.

More thunderstruck at her hasty demand, than at that independent manner, to which they had been long accustomed, the Reverend Theodore Leslie and his lady regarded each other: the fortune, they knew, must be paid, and they had taken the fraternal freedom of borrowing, without asking the possessor, two or three thousand pounds! What must they do? They agreed, after some little consultation, to see Raymond; put a good face on the matter; ascribe their anger to the haste only of the moment; give them a couple of thousands for the present, and tell them the remainder should be forthcoming in a very short time.

But Lady Isabella, once offended, did not so easily forgive; and, with a degree of mortifying condescension to her sister and brother-in-law, informed them, by letter, she could wait a few months for the remainder, if they would order her three thousand pounds immediately, and without again seeing them, or even mentioning husband to them, she accompanied him to join his regiment, still quartered within a few miles of Eglantine.

Major Raymond, as has been said before, was young, handsome, and, *pour le moment*, could be very insinuating; but his mind was weak, vain, and wavering; with an

understanding too shallow to continue long the man, according to Lady Isabella's taste, who, in an husband, certainly looked for a being superior to herself; and no one, but such a being, could make her endure a state she had always from her heart despised, that of a wife.—A rash moment of *pique* against Frederic Harrington, the wish to be rid entirely of the persecutions of her friends, in regard to Sir Charles Sefton, who became every day more and more odious to her, particularly since his attachment to Margaret, urged her to fly to marriage with a man whose person she liked, and whom she admired for the present, for those mental qualities she thought him possessed of, but which consisted only in sentimental imitations learnt by rote, and all the acquired accomplishments of Raymond were the mere flash of the moment, and soon worn out. Though, to answer her own purpose, Lady Isabella had encouraged Sir Charles in his designs against Margaret, yet it so shewed to her the depravity of his heart, to pursue such an intrigue, while he was on the point, as he thought, of leading herself to the altar, and argued such a want of feeling and principle, that though her own mind was far from correct, yet it was too great to ally itself to such a compound of fashionable licentiousness.

Major Raymond belonged to a regiment in which there were but very few married men; and the officers' wives were women of remarkably correct and exemplary manners, not very young, and by no means handsome. Major Raymond waited with ardour and impatience, when he could shew off his dashing and beautiful wife; and with a very small fortune, very little more than his military pay, and his wife's three thousand pounds that he had just received from Mr. Leslie's banker, he commenced living at the rate of five thousand a year.

He obtained on credit a most elegant barouche, and with his captivating partner, joined the regiment in high style, took a magnificent house and gardens, and furnished his side-board with massy plate, on the same precarious certainty of paying for it *when he could*.

Nothing could exceed the splendour of his establishment, nor the expensive and fashionable *parure* of her Ladyship: nothing was spoken of but the prodigious fortune of Lady Isabella Raymond, her beauty and her elegance; but she soon perceived that her Raymond was not the man formed by love and nature to make *her* happy; she hated the state she had embraced; and in a few weeks, Major Raymond perceived, notwithstanding the playful variety of her attractions, that her beauty was become familiar to him, and no longer new; he shuddered at the prospect of her expence, and perceived already he had contracted enormous debts through her means, which he should never be able to pay.

In the mean time, she fled to a series of dissipation of the most extravagant kind, to banish every species of thought, if possible, from her mind, and which dissipation was so incorrect, that it bordered on licentiousness; yet such was the fascination of *her* manners, and such her splendour and expence, that she met with many who imitated her, more who censured her, and not one who could applaud a conduct which appeared to set all decorum, all morality and religion at defiance: for Lady Isabella, as a wife, was infinitely more conspicuous, and apparently indecorous, than in her single state.

Leaving Major Raymond to the felicity of his wedded situation, it is time to revert to the wounded Frederic: hourly did he amend and promise again to bless the fond hopes of those by whom he was beloved, with his speedy recovery: but as his health increased,

so the ever uncurbed affections of Frederic increased towards Mary, and the unchecked ardour of his desire to be indissolubly united to such sweetness and amiability.

He dreaded, however, to make known the state of his heart to his uncle: for he knew, that though Sir Edward despised all haughtiness and improper pride, yet that he was very averse to unsuitable marriages; and also, that he was, like COELEBS, though not for himself, but for this his dear nephew, in continual "search of a wife," who should add *birth* and *fortune* to accomplishments and virtue.

The agitation of Frederic's mind, with the secret buried in his bosom, of his love to Mary, and eager to disclose itself, brought on a fresh attack of his fever; and, on the calling in again of Dr. C——, his anxious relative and friends found his life despaired of by that skilful physician.

Frederic intreated, with a firmness which surprised his uncle, (for though he never doubted his courage, yet he well knew, that *firmness* was not the leading virtue in the mind of his nephew,) that the Doctor would not conceal from him, if he thought there were the least symptoms of danger in his case. Edward Marsham, with christian preparation only in view, seconded the patient's request.

"Yes, worthiest of men," said Frederic, feebly grasping his hand, "I wish to die in the sacred communion of the church; but I have also other motives which impel me to be thus earnest with this excellent physician."

Dr. Ch—dl—r, in terms the most tender and delicate, though contrary to his always received opinion, of kindly keeping up the spirits of his patients to the last, by a flattery the most laudable on the part of a *physician*, told him there certainly *was* apparent danger.

Frederic, then turning to his uncle, said, "I have, my dear sir, an independent fortune, and I wish to make my will." His uncle acquiesced in the mournful, though proper proposal; but scarcely had he dispatched his orders for the village attorney to attend, when Frederic said, "Now, sir, I will not die with a secret in my bosom, which has been some time concealed there from you, which now greatly oppresses and agitates my mind; and ere I quit this life, I entreat that Mary Marsham may survive me only as my widow, (until she shall please to bestow her hand elsewhere); and that I may call her mine, by marriage, before I die."

Amazement sat on the countenance of Sir Edward, for he well knew that his nephew had always an abundant share of pride; and besides, he had felt almost certain that he was deeply enamoured of Lady Isabella Emerson, and that the report of her marriage with Major Raymond, which had then reached Eglantine, had increased his fever: for the immediate and present news of the success of our expedition against Flushing had been kept from him, lest the anguish of disappointment and regret at being absent on the glorious occasion, might have endangered and retarded his convalescence. The tremor, however, of Mary, her blushes, and the perfect state in which were the senses of his nephew, spite of the ardency of his fever, and the severity of his indisposition, convinced Sir Edward that this predilection had taken place for some time, though totally unsuspected by *him*.

The request of a dying man was sacred; instant consent was given; and leading the weeping Mary to the bed-side, Sir Edward joined their hands, and said, "Be blest, my children! and, oh! may HE, to whom all things are possible, restore you, my beloved

Frederic, to life, that ye may long be happily united by the sweet bonds of mutual affection!" He then acted the part of a father to Mary, and requested the worthy curate, Edward Marsham, to bind them in that state, which nought but death can separate; and the ring which had united *him* to the mother of Mary, was now put on the finger of her daughter, who had the sad prospect before her, of being a widow on the day she was made a bride!

After the arrival of the lawyer, Frederic bequeathed all his remaining fortune to his lovely wife, except a few trifling legacies to her family and his uncle: and much exhausted with the conflicting scenes of the day, sank back on his pillow, and giving a deep sigh, faintly exclaimed, "I shall now die most happy!"

Mary gave a shriek, and fainted in the arms of Sir Edward, who, from his own grief and agitation, was scarcely able to afford her his support. "Be not thus alarmed," said the worthy doctor, "he is not yet gone; it is, perhaps, a crisis in his disorder, which, instead of hastening his demise, may, with care and the most delicate caution, restore him to life: leave him alone with me, and suffer him not to experience the least agitation of the mind and spirits; if you remain here, that agitation will be so violent, that I cannot answer for his life another hour.

An indescribable terror had seized the mind of Mary during the performance of the solemn ceremony; nor did it entirely proceed from the mournful idea of her being only wedded to the man she loved, as he lay at the point of death; no, a fatal presage seemed to speak conviction to her sinking heart, that should it please the Almighty to work almost a miracle in her favour, by restoring him to life, she should never know happiness in an union with Frederic Harrington. Benevolent and good as was his uncle, Sir Edward, she yet could see a reluctant pride seated on his brow as he gave her away; and though, with its awe-inspiring circumstances, the event particularly required seriousness, yet the gravity of her father's countenance was not only tinged with the grief he must naturally feel at such a moment, but it was replete with a high degree of vexation and inquietude. Such was the marriage of the interesting Mary, and, too fatally for her future peace, was verified by her present predictions.

To the great joy of Sir Edward, the disorder of his nephew, after an alarming crisis, took a favourable turn: youth, a naturally excellent constitution, and having the first and ardent wish of his heart fully satisfied, his recovery was as rapid as it was astonishing.

His youthful bride blamed her fears, imputed them only to nerves, perhaps debilitated by anxious watchings, and now began to think, in spite of a coolness and gravity on the part of Sir Edward, which sometimes a little disconcerted her, that no happiness on earth was equal to hers, in thus being so soon, and so unexpectedly united to the object of her first and only love. Frederic, for the present, felt rapture unfeigned; riches, titles, honours, all were despised, all seemed poor when he pressed his Mary to his bosom; and in those fond moments, he had no other wish than to dwell with her for ever, amongst the rural scenes of pastoral life; and he *then* felt, that he could, without a sigh, resign all the gay scenes of fashion and elegance, to which he was once so devoted, and in which he had generally taken not only a shining, but a conspicuous part.

His uncle purchased, and presented it to Mrs. Harrington, an elegant cottage near her uncle's farm, till the health of Frederic should be perfectly re-established: but she

could not forbear remarking, in spite of all her happiness, that Sir Edward never expressed a wish, when her husband's recovery should be complete, to see her in London the ensuing winter; and that when he took his leave, his parting with her uncle and father was cold and distant; while he formally took *her* hand, and just raised it to his lips; an action which appeared to her feeling mind to have more in it of politeness than cordiality.

Her heart was full; the tears mounted to her eyes, but they were soon succeeded by smiles, and utterly chased away by the tender embrace of her Frederic, as he fondly wiped them off. Alas! the short hours of bliss are fleeting as the celerity of an arrow, while the chalice of sorrow, which we are often compelled to empty to the very dregs, is deep as its draught is bitter! and oh! how frequently is it replenished!

When Sir Edward Harrington thought his nephew was lost to him for ever, how anxious was his every wish, not only to meet, but to prevent those of his beloved Frederic!

When that much loved nephew was out of danger, he thought only of his wounded honour; his having been superseded in his regiment, for absence without leave; having no share in the glorious achievements of his countrymen;—and all for the sake of a little country-girl, whose want of fortune and lack of high connexions, made her by no means a fit wife for the future Sir Frederic Harrington, whose title was as ancient as the order of nobility to which he belonged, and whose alliances were of the first in the kingdom. MR. HARRINGTON, who had been

“The very glass of fashion, the observ'd  
“Of all observers;”—————

who had shone in the drawing-room, and glittered in all the splendid scenes of the great and gay; and who held a distinguished rank in the world, by his birth, fortune, and expectations, must there introduce an obscure country wife, who, it was true, in the village where she was born, brought up, and resided, was the paragon of all whom she might come in competition with; and who, in the friendly parties of the Leslies, where he had seen her, and where his nephew *unfortunately* had been first charmed with her, and whence all restraint was banished, had known how to conduct herself with that unobtruding ease which rendered her *there* an interesting and a charming guest: but then she only excited admiration as a very superior kind of girl, for one entirely brought up in the country! But what accomplishments could she boast to entitle her to be the wife of his Frederic? Sir Edward had never heard her sing; he knew not that she was possessed of a seraphic voice; but he was sure she did not know one note of music, she knew not even how to beat, with graceful *attitudes*, the *tambourine*; she could not draw a common landscape, much less designs for *Egyptian* mausoleums, or *Grecian* statues; neither could she speak French, Italian, nor one word of *German*: in short, she did not possess one of those parts of education so requisite for the wife of a man of high fashion, to have at least a smattering of; for it was not needful for the wife of Frederic Harrington to know how to make his shirts; and he had not a doubt but that she would be rustic enough to let out the secret, that she knew how to *spin*!—shocking!—

Such were the reflections of Sir Edward Harrington on the marriage of his nephew; and such are the prejudices of high birth, even in the best of minds. The great



and high-born are like a distinct class of beings from their inferiors; may they ever continue so; for we know it is impossible that all men can be born equal; but let them not spurn at an union with exemplary merit, especially where there *can* be no degradation in the alliance, nor prefer the frivolous and empty accomplishments of changeful fashion, to the more solid endowments of the mind.

Nothing, we believe, is more hard to eradicate than family pride: the excellent, the worthy Sir Edward Harrington, was not without an abundant share; and moving only among those of his own sphere, he was weak enough to think those accomplishments *essential* in the education of a lady, which are merely *ornamental*.

He knew not half the natural abilities, or indeed the acquirements of his lovely niece; nor reflected how young and ductile she was, and how easily she might be taught some of those futile accomplishments on which fashion sets so high a value. At the parsonage, where she knew the well-taught and naturally intelligent Lady Isabella Emerson made all the attainments of education seem poor, when displayed by another in her presence; Mary then, with her own natural humility, concealed the *few* which *she* possessed.

She could not play, it is true, either on the *harp*, *piano-forte*, or *tambourine*; but she drew with taste, and from nature: her father had made her an excellent *French* scholar, though she knew not Italian or German; and with her uncle Charles and her sister, when at home, she frequently conversed in French, that they might by practice improve each other; but as she was a proficient in the language, more grammatically by books than she shone in it by fluency of speech, this acquirement was also unknown to strangers.

Sir Edward Harrington had seen her at her own dwelling, in a sphere the most humble and domestic; tending the couch of his sick nephew, with all the indefatigable care and tenderness of a nurse: he would joyfully have given three thousand pounds with Mary, to have made some worthy Essex farmer happy in such a wife; but he felt very far from satisfied in seeing her become his own niece!

An unjust and illiberal idea shot across his mind and added to his prejudice: he revolved over many circumstances, all perverted to his falsely-conceived opinion; and he suffered himself to imbibe the thought, that the father and uncles of this artless girl had laid plans to effect an union between her and his nephew. Oh! cruel suspicion, how often thou shewest thy meanness, by not suffering the tongue to utter what thy pernicious poison implanteth within the breast; how deep are the injuries that are inflicted by thee on the innocent! for, oft-times, by the silence thou imposest, thou takest only firmer root in the mind; and the suspected never find an opportunity of pleading their defence.

## CHAP. XV.

A FATAL ACCIDENT AND AN UNEXPECTED  
EVENT.

Say, what can ease thy present grief,  
 Can former joys afford relief?  
 Those former joys, remember'd still,  
 The more augment the recent ill:  
 What woes from *mortal* ills accrue!  
 And what from *natural* ensue!  
 Disease and casualty attend  
 Our footsteps, to the journey's end.

COOPER's *Poetical Blossoms*.

MR. HARRINGTON was, within a few weeks after the departure of his uncle, established in all honey-moon happiness, at his wife's cottage *ornée*. Margaret, with no one adventure, or prospect of any thing of the kind, (for she had given up the expectation of Sir Charles coming about the farm in various disguises, and had strictly examined the features of every masculine-looking female gleaner in vain,) now passed the unchequered *routine* of her dreary hours in tears, spleen, and ill-humour, and was but a poor substitute for her sister in the management of household affairs.

The reign of romantic solitude was past, and she had no more delicious romances from Lady Isabella, to cast their sweet illusive principles over her gloomy hours. She again had recourse to the library, but her taste had become too vitiated to find entertainment in the domestic novels of a RICHARDSON, or a MISS BURNEY: the new publications, teeming with scandalous anecdotes of known characters\*, under fictitious names, were, as yet, unexplored by her; and if they had been, could not be either entertaining or interesting, as the parties were unknown to her; neither had they found their way to the receptacle of novels, from whence she drew the chief sources of her leisure amusements.

Again she essayed the charms of old romance and legendary tales: very, very eventful had been the scenes she had witnessed within the last two months of her life; but yet they had nothing in them which could remind her of towers, the dungeons of ancient castles, or hitherto-undiscovered parchments found amongst mouldering ruins; and she read over a few pages of these once-dearly-cherished works, and turned from them in disgust; while she deemed herself too good an historian to re-peruse *historic* romances, which, though doubtful facts were enveloped in thick clouds of fiction, she fancied were all literally true.\*

But, one evening, the poor, despised, and almost forgotten Phelim O'Gurphy awakened her late sleeping lethargies to the marvellous and romantic. He was sitting on a bench, under a window at which she sat reclining in pensive mood; when the voice, and

\* Particularly the libellous trash of Eth—g—on, the author of "A WINTER IN DUBLIN," &c.

\* This may with propriety be termed *Historique*, since every one must acknowledge that it is *true*.

in particular, the words of Phelim, addressed to his fellow-servant, arrested all her attention: "Botheration; cannot you be after understanding me? why your head is as thick as *mush*! I tell you over and over again, for the *first* time, as I did *before*, that every mother's son in Ireland, that has his name beginning with an *O* or a *Mac*, are all come from the *kings* of Ireland!"

Margaret now began to think that she had not been wrong in the first ideas she had formed of the nobility of Phelim, especially when she heard his indignation at the rude laugh he had extorted by this assertion from the English clown, and who said to the Hibernian, "*Soa*, you would fain make *un* believe, that you *bees* the son of a king! *by goles*, and you'd make a *rum* sort of a prince!"

"Arrah! and why not?" said Phelim, in great wrath; "I'd have you to know, that I was born to as good a *property* as any lad in Ireland; but he who *owned it*, would never let my poor mother have so much as a potatoe belonging to it; and, to be sure, my mother, was not she an O'Hagglety, and my own father an O'Gurphy? and every body in Tipperary knows the O'Haggleties is a good a family as ever tasted potatoes and buttermilk: but now I will be after telling you all about it: my uncle O'Hagglety, my mother's own brother, he married a woman of the name of Mac-Alister; and och, to be sure, was not she a pretty nut to crack under the devil's tooth?"—"I *do'ant* know," says the clown, "any thing about *she*."—"Aye, by my soul, but I do," continued O'Gurphy. "Well, my dear honey, what does *she* do, but claim a relationship! saying, she was the *fifth* cousin to our *seventh* cousin, who enjoyed the <sup>\*</sup>property till it should come to our turn to have it: he *was* a Mac-Alister; but I believe *her* name, if she had *spake* truth, had no Mac to it, but it was *Mulcalister*; she, och, *the devil burn her*, has got the best part of the property now, because of her name, and being the *fifth* instead of the *seventh* cousin: so poor Phelim is obliged to work for his living. Arrah, and what should I have done, if I had not found such a good master? Here's God bless him, and long life to him! By the holy St. Patrick, and you've emptied the mug while I have been talking to you!"

Margaret had heard enough; she rose and walked from the window; while her reflections crowded one after the other in quick succession: "Ah!" thought she, "I knew I could not be mistaken in my ideas of his former grandeur; he is higher even than I thought: I imagined him only to have been a nobleman, but I find him in reality a prince! descended from the most ancient kings of Ireland! Oh! false Sir Charles, perhaps I shall one day triumph over you, when the wicked usurper, Lady *Mulcalister* will be obliged to deliver up the immense riches and extensive domains, which she now withholds from this lovely youth, their rightful lord!"

After that moment, which had convinced her of Phelim's dignity, she never requested him to perform any menial office; though, from the time she had imagined him, according to Mrs. Kennedy's predictions, a very low fellow, she had not only behaved to him with haughtiness and contempt, but had always called upon him to do every species of drudgery about the house, and the good-nature and diligence with which he had obeyed her commands she now construed into proofs of his extreme love towards her.

She actually shed tears at her former cruelty, and would willingly have waited on him herself, if shame had not deterred her: his assiduity, however, when he has seen her

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\*The lower class of Irish are all uncommonly fond of claiming relationship, and talking of their *property*, though often only in the clouds.

perhaps at the pump, filling a pitcher of water for herself, and which has made him run eagerly to fill it for her, she was sure proceeded from the patient ardour of his affections, and she regarded Phelim O’Gurphy with more admiration than ever.

Happy in the ideal possession of the heart of this hero in disguise, she again applied her solitary hours to reading, but the ghosts, the witches, the spacious corridors, mouldering castles and dungeons, since the pig-stye adventure, had lost their delusive charms.

In her father’s library was the excellent novel of GIL BLAS; she there found the affecting history of a young cavalier, disguised as a gardener, on the estate of him who was married to his wife, while he, the former husband, had been reported to have been slain in battle. The interesting romance of ZAÏDE also, and some other Turkish tales, shewed her how frequent were such transformations; her romantic mind told her how probable were such adventures, and Phelim, therefore, was again re-instated in her heart’s opinion, on firmer grounds than ever.

Mr. Marsham had gone that day, when she had heard Phelim relate the grandeur of his descent, to dine with some members of a fox-chase society, and this annual dinner generally kept him to a late hour. Margaret and her father had dined *tête-à-tête*, and in the evening walked over to the cottage, to see the new-married couple. Frederic Harrington left his home, only to take a few very quiet morning airings at a gentle pace, in his post-chaise, on account of his yet unhealed wound; and he still continued in a delicate state of health, though gaining strength every day.

He was, as yet, delighted with his charming Mary; but as his health amended, he began to feel a sameness in his way of life, which convinced him he could never endure such a monotony, however agreeable, to continue always: and though with eagerness he had once expressed his wishes that his Mary should have a music-master, and other masters to teach her a few polite accomplishments, that he might shew her off the ensuing winter in town to advantage; yet, a faint emotion of surprise, and almost self-reproof, sometimes, though not often, arose in his mind, to think that he should have been so very infatuated, as to make a girl *his* wife, who could not play with spirit at every genteel game at cards; could not, he was sure, delight in the charming midnight squeeze of a crowded London rout, nor be quite at home in the gay and splendid scenes of continual and confirmed dissipation.

These symptoms of regret were very faint indeed; and, as has been remarked before, very seldom arose in his breast; but that they *did* arise, is certain: and when Mary, at such moments, delighted at the thoughts of learning music, has expressed that delight, and asked when she was to begin? he has said, “Well, stay till we get to London; though I do really think you are too old to learn now.” Then his sudden return of fondness, as he regarded the varying attractions of her animated and intelligent countenance, the sweetness of her bewitching smile, and reflected on the excellency of her heart and disposition, he has quickly thought within himself, Oh! such an angelic being must confer honour on any situation; and then impulsively catching her to his bosom, he has said, “Your sweet voice, my charming girl, depend upon it, shall be quickly cultivated, that you may know how to sing to music, when any one may accompany you, and with proper expression.”

Edward Marsham, as yet, perceived no change in the mutual happiness of the young people: it was indeed too early a day for him to imbibe such an idea, and Mary had really suffered no diminution of her felicity; for at present her Frederic was all tenderness, politeness, and attention.

Margaret longed for such a state of bliss as she saw her sister enjoy; and yet Margaret, with all her folly, could not associate Phelim O’Gurphy in those ideas.

She had passed, as well as her father, a delightful evening, and Edward went home completely happy in the felicity of his children. Frederic revered and loved his father-in-law, and the pleasure his society ever afforded to this in many other respects wavering young man, always rendered him doubly kind to his dear Mary: and the worthy Curate, joyful in the conjugal bliss of his dearest daughter, walked home in fervent gratitude to heaven, his heart overflowing with satisfaction, and his eye glistening with the tear of thankfulness to the Supreme Dispenser of good.

Edward and his daughter had not long been at home, when, as they were expressing their surprise at the lateness of the hour, and that Ralph had not yet returned, both saying almost at the same time, “I knew he would not be early, but I never knew him so late before;” a loud ringing at the front gate rather alarmed them, for it was always the custom of Ralph to take his horse round to the stable-yard, and come in himself at the door which led to the back part of the house: Phelim, however, who had sat up for him, went quickly to the gate, and *as* quickly returned, with a countenance as pale as death, and scarcely able to articulate, “Oh! sir, for the love of J——s come! oh! my poor master!”

Margaret, not knowing what she did, and now feeling, for the first time, that she really *loved* her *rustic* uncle, rushed with her father to the front garden; there a most piteous sight presented itself to their horror-struck eyes, two men were bearing in their arms the almost lifeless and bleeding remains of Mr. Ralph Marsham! for his collar-bone was broken in two places, his arm also broken, and his body almost dashed to pieces.

The strides of death were too rapid and hasty for any medical art to arrest; speech returned no more, though sense did not seem utterly fled, for he essayed to lift his unbroken arm, and his finger appeared to point, and his eye to glance towards an old *escritoire*, which stood in his bedroom, and in a few minutes after he was laid on his bed, he resigned his spirit into the hands of his Creator.

Had the action of pointing to an old worm-eaten *escritoire* been performed at any other moment, what food for adventure would it not have been to Margaret! But wholly absorbed in the agonising scene before them, she sank, bitterly weeping, on her poor uncle’s shattered body, and soon, in a fainting fit, was carried senseless out of the chamber.

The two men who had borne in his body were next attended to; one appeared the perfect gentleman, though dressed in the equalising *costume* of a modern protector of the *noble* art of pugilism; and he explained to the Reverend Mr. Marsham the dreadful catastrophe. In going down an hill, the horse of Mr. Ralph Marsham had started at a cow which was grazing in a neighbouring meadow: the hill being very steep, and Mr. Marsham knowing that the horse had always been accustomed to start at black cattle, made him turn the creature round; in turning, he went too close to the side of the

declivity, and fell from a perpendicular height of several feet, with the whole weight of the horse falling upon him.

The gentleman who had been supping at an house in the vicinity, was walking home, accompanied by his servant, and they witnessed all the horror of the fatal accident, without having it in their power to prevent it: the horse had fled, and they bore the miserably lacerated man home between them. From a direction they found on a letter in his pocket, and which they had made out by the light of the moon, they discovered the dwelling of the unhappy man, and conveyed him to his sorrowing survivors.

Edward intreated to know to whom he was obliged for this mournful, yet friendly office; and found the gentleman was a man of immense fortune who resided chiefly in London, a Mr. Davenport.

He was then on a visit with his lady, in the country; and this Mrs. Davenport was formerly a Miss Maddison, who, though some years younger than the late Mrs. Edward Marsham, had been her most particular friend. Mr. Davenport promised to call on Edward before he quitted the country, which he expected would be very soon, and wishing him a good-night, Edward repaired to the chamber of his departed brother, to weep over his shattered remains.

In the morning, he recollected the escritoire, and taking the keys of the deceased, he there found his will; but what particularly excited his astonishment, and added to his affliction, on account of poor Margaret, to whom he now found he had nothing to bequeath, was the following clause in Ralph's last will and testament:

“And, whereas, in my days of early youth and indiscretion, I particularly attached myself to a young woman of the name of Jane Matthews, of the parish of St. John's, in the village of Frelingham, in the county of Suffolk, and by whom I had a son; I therefore give and bequeath to this my natural child, Matthew Marsham, excepting one hundred pounds sterling to each of my nieces, all my personal property and furniture, together with the farm, and farm-land of Eglantine; which said farm was left to me by my late father Joseph Marsham, to be entirely at my future disposal, as his will shall certify.—Jane Matthews has now been dead some years; my son Matthew Marsham was brought up to the chirurgical profession, and was appointed surgeon to one of his Majesty's West-India corps; and has been returned about two years to England: his agents, Messrs.——— and ——, will certify whether he is living, and where he may be found.”

Poor Edward was left now with his sixty pounds per annum, which he received for his cure, and his share of a small life-annuity, with his brothers, made his annual income little more than eighty pounds: he lifted his eyes to heaven, in humble submission to the decrees of Providence, while they streamed with the mingled tears of regret, at the loss of his worthy brother, and at the idea of his daughter's indigence.

He immediately dispatched a letter to the rightful heir; and a visit of condolence from Mr. and Mrs. Davenport, put a period, for the present, to his mournful reflections.

## CHAP. XVI.

## A NEW CHARACTER.

Why do we pluck all the flowers in Spring? Winter is niggardly with flowers, and the few that do spring up, smell but faintly. Therefore these few should be planted early, and raised with care.

KOTZEBUE.

MRS. DAVENPORT advanced with much polite sweetness to meet the embrace of her worthy clerical friend; and hearing from him, during the course of her visit, of the state in which Mr. Marsham had left his affairs, she requested to have the happiness of taking Miss Marsham to town with her the ensuing week; offered her her protection, and promised, in every respect, to consider her, and treat her, as her own child.

Mrs. Davenport had no children; the offer was too advantageous for the Curate to refuse, and he joyfully acquiesced in the warmly-expressed wishes of such disinterested benevolence: he had known Emily Maddison a most charming and unassuming girl; generosity of disposition amounted almost, in her, to a fault; but it was an amiable one, and Edward now rejoiced that she had married a man, whose immense fortune, and their having been married eleven years without any prospect of a family, rendered that profuse liberality no longer a fault, but rather a virtue.

Edward Marsham had yet to learn, that Emily Maddison, and the dashing Mrs. Davenport, were two very distinct characters; she had married a man of immense riches, and a very slave to fashion. The gay scenes of London, to which he hastily introduced his beautiful bride in the winter he had wedded her, took a speedy and rooted effect, in a mind naturally weak; her unassuming character easily degenerated into a total want of proper self-opinion; and she was hurried onwards, only as the stream of fashionable customs and manners might carry her. The few virtues of her mind were quickly swallowed up in the vortex of dissipation; and though at first she loved her husband, who was certainly very handsome, and two years younger than herself, yet, in less than one twelvemonth, she cared so little about him, that he became perfectly indifferent to her: while the flutterers of the day breathed soft nonsense and new compliments in her ear, her husband's ardour cooled towards her, and the fops of fashion were preferred for their continued assiduity. Mr. Davenport soon began to feel that the highest satisfaction he derived from his married state, was the repeated remarks of his wife being the handsomest and best-dressed woman in the whole circle of fashion.

Mrs. Davenport was once, not only beautiful, she was also in an high degree fascinating: yet the various scenes of dissipation in which she was engaged, with the lateness of the hours she kept, soon destroyed her charms, and in eight years she scarce shewed the reliques of what she *had* been; every inventive art was essayed towards the restoration of a beauty once solely indebted to nature, and with some success on a face yet lovely, and more hurt by the vigils of fashion than by years.

It is true she might have been the *very young* mother of Margaret, but she looked as young as she did; and observing no prospect of rivalry in such a girl, her natural good-nature, which seldom or ever deserted her, suggested the kind idea of taking her home, as a cherished *protégée*: the word *daughter*, for a girl of seventeen, though only by adoption, would have terrified her from performing the beneficent action.

\*It was now some years since her husband and she had made the accommodating agreement between themselves, to let each other act, in every respect, as should best please them individually: they were both lively and good-humoured, they were both *gentlefolks*, and there was no acrimony or *vulgar quarrels* between them. Mr. Davenport had his *chère amie* in private lodgings, without any concealment from his wife, or experiencing the smallest degree of disagreeable jealousy or *uncomfortable* expostulation on *her* part: while Mrs. Davenport, who was naturally much more the dupe of her vanity than of a roving disposition, was as eager to make conquests, and afford hope to the unprincipled train of libertines who followed her, as any single coquette, whose chief delight may be in the *number* of her admirers.

But Mrs. Davenport, though her heart was warm by its natural generosity, had much more of the English frigidity than the Italian *amoroso* in her composition.

At the latter end of the ensuing week, after Mrs. Davenport had paid her visit to the farm-house, Margaret was conveyed by her and her husband, in an elegant carriage and four, to their magnificent house in Grosvenor-square: she had seen, it is true, an high degree of taste and splendour at the parsonage, but here, all that the most refined luxury could invent, or opulence bestow, presented itself to charm her eyes and delude her warm imagination.

She was immediately put in possession of a beautifully decorated dressing-room and bed-chamber, which, with all her native sweetness and polish of manners, Mrs. Davenport desired her, while she gave her at the same time a kind embrace, to consider her own.

Margaret had been put into very handsome mourning for her uncle, at Mrs. Davenport's expence: she was now in a fine black cloth riding-habit, and being in sables, her dress she knew would be soon adjusted for their seven o'clock dinner, and throwing off her hat, she sat down on a superb sofa-bed, to admire all around her, and feast her eyes with the beauty of that apartment, which she had been told to consider as her own.

The beautifully devised little fire-screens, the emigrant bellows, and the portable book-cases, all shewed the opulence of their possessors, and the elaborate skill of the artist; they were not only tasteful trifles, they were costly; of the most expensive materials, and of the choicest and most difficult to be obtained foreign wood that could be purchased.

It was autumn, the weather was warm, and the half-open windows wafted with every breath of air the ravishing fragrance of the exotic plants, which were placed on small stands on each side a long pier-glass, in which Margaret did not fail to take a frequent survey of her form and dress from head to foot. All the distilled perfumes of English flowers, with that of the Eastern rose, she found in beautiful little bottles, in the recesses of her handsome and modern constructed dressing-table.

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\**Historique.*



She took down a book or two, in order to see of what her little library consisted. The trifling productions of the day formed the chief part; among which, she found some works of Mrs. Kennedy's, and having often perused *them* before, she took down various others, to see if she could find any similar to those works formerly lent her by Lady Isabella Raymond; but this library consisted a good deal of trials for modern *indiscretions*, and some loose novels in the French language, such as *Le Sofa*, *Les Aventures d'un jeun Turc*, and a few more by the *unrestrained* writers which have flourished since the revolution: there were also a few English poems, where morality was quite unheeded, their subjects addressed only to the senses, while their language breathed a mixture of tenderness, delicacy, and sentiment, all calculated to warm the imagination, and turn the principles of virtue from their pure and genuine source. Some of these beautiful hanging shelves teemed with scandalous publications, not *very* new; such as the *Rising Sun*, *The Noble Cornutos*, *The Piccadilly Ambulator*, and *The Epics of the Ton*.

The clock striking six, made her start up and think of beginning her toilette for dinner, especially, too, as Mademoiselle Minette, the French attendant of Mrs. Davenport, came to request her to accept her assistance.

Margaret rose and curtsied to one whom she really thought was a modern fine lady, and evidently much her superior in outward appearance, address and *undress*—for her shoulders and bosom were literally bare, as were her arms, from the wrist to a small strap, called a sleeve, and all the other covering of her arms were a very handsome pair of bracelets: her dark hair was elegantly dressed, and fastened up with a gilt coronet comb; what little there was of her gown, was of a fine pink muslin; her cheeks were highly rouged, while her whole air had all that effrontery of a woman of high fashion, who sets the opinion of others at an independent defiance.

She advanced, however, with that mingled ease and politeness of manner which French women alone possess, to offer her assistance: Margaret, with much *naïveté*, said, "Oh! madam, I cannot think of troubling *you*, and besides, I am generally accustomed entirely to dress myself."—

"But, *ma chère demoiselle*, *c'est mon occupation*," said the lively Minette, "I am but the *soubrette* of Madame Davenport, and I should have done me the honour of waiting on you sooner, but that madame could not be pleased with the way I had arranged her hair; and she has had it altered five time; and, *à la fin*, I have had to comb it all out, and put on a *chevelure*!"—"What is that?" said Margaret, who, though ashamed of her former mistake, in conceiving the chambermaid to be a lady of fashion, yet her curiosity could not rest till she knew what Mrs. Davenport had put on her head; and not being very conversant in modern French, she had not heard the term.

"Ah! *Mon Dieu*!" replied Mademoiselle, "you know not—I believe, indeed, you call it *vig*, but madame would faint at the word." Margaret now thought she saw that the sly Minette appeared to laugh at her rustic ignorance; and she resolved in future to observe in silence, and be less inquisitive; she therefore coolly said, "I shall not want any assistance from you to-day, so leave me; for perhaps Mrs. Davenport may want you."—"Eh! *non*, *je vous assure*," said Minette, "*mais attendez!* Madame expect to-night one gentleman she love *ver* much, so she tell me to bring number of apologies to you, because she wish me to make her very much amiable; and she say, to-morrow, if she has time, she will see for one *fille* to wait *exprés* upon you."

Margaret's yet uncontaminated heart, could not help overflowing at the repeated instances of Mrs. Davenport's kindness; but Minette appeared astonished at this English refinement of sensibility, and said, "*Eh! mon Dieu, vous pleurez, donc? tenez*—I have some *rouge* in my bosom, *la voilà!* put it on your cheeks, you are so pale."—"No, I am very well," said Margaret, "therefore, leave me now; I had rather be alone."—"Mais donc, mademoiselle, *mettez en,*" said the soubrette: "*Non, non,*" said Margaret, "*Je vous dis.*"—"Eh! donc, *mettez un petit peu de ça,*" said the persevering Minette. "No, I tell you," said Margaret, half angry, "I desire you will go, I want no assistance, and you only hinder me from dressing." Minette shrugged her shoulders and retired.

Margaret had now heard there was to be company in the evening, and she felt much surprised that there should be any gentleman that Mrs. Davenport, *a married woman*, "loved very much;" but, she thought, of course, it must be some near relation, some cousin, it might be; or perhaps, as she had been so particular about her dress, some odd kind of uncle, whom she was desirous of pleasing; but then again, she recollected that many of the French novels she had perused did not exclude lovers because a woman was married; quite the contrary; but then, O dear, Mrs. Davenport was so different, she was too good, she was sure; and Mr. Davenport was too handsome for his wife to love any other man.

However, there was to be company, and *gentlemen* were expected; and Margaret was not yet judicious enough to know how to dress herself; and the elegant crape frock, trimmed with bugles, which Mrs. Davenport had purchased for her to appear in at the Argyle Rooms or the Pantheon, she took out to wear on this evening; after having adorned her hair, which never curled well, and which was now rather deranged by her journey, with a jet diadem.

She had never, since her days of infancy, worn a frock; and now she found all her efforts in vain, to dress herself without assistance; particularly from the breadth of her back, and a want of pliancy in her arms, which made her unable to button it. The clock struck seven, it chimed a quarter after, but she was yet no forwarder; and applying herself to the bell, she rang with all her might, but no one answered; again, and again she rang, after waiting several minutes between each pull which she gave the bell-rope.

It was half-past seven, and dinner had not yet been announced: five gentlemen and two ladies had arrived to a friendly dinner; and, in the many pretty things these gentlemen were uttering to her, Mrs. Davenport forgot that such a person as her dear *protégée* was in the house; while she was not handsome enough for Mr. Davenport to think at all about her; who, never much at his ease in the company of modest women, drawled out a few civil speeches to the lady and her daughter, who composed the female part of his guests. At length a servant came to say the dinner was served up; and an eager contention took place for the hand of the brilliant hostess, in which, however, the nearest to her succeeded in obtaining; and they all descended to the dining-parlour, without once giving a thought to poor Margaret, who, in her first effort to ring the bell, had broken the *cordon*, and therefore not one servant had heard it ring. At length one of the footmen in waiting, said, in a low voice, to his mistress, "I fancy, madam, no one has informed Miss Marsham that the dinner is ready." Mrs. Davenport now seemed ready to expire with laughter, and turning to the gentleman who was seated next to her, she said, "Well, was there ever such a creature as I am? Do you know, I brought a little girl out of the country with me for a

companion, yesterday, and we arrived only here this morning, from Ingatestone, at which place we slept last night, and I do assure you I had quite forgot she was in the house! Mr. Davenport, why did not you think of Miss Marsham? Order," continued she, turning to the footman, "Mademoiselle Minette to go up to her immediately; and if she is already engaged with her, send up one of the maids to Miss Marsham's dressing-room, and beg her to come down,—tell her we have half dined."

Mr. Davenport replied, turning his looks chiefly towards the company, — "Why, really, Emily, had you brought home a young lady of seventeen, any thing tolerable in her person, I perhaps *might* have thought about her; but I assure you, my dear friends, she has picked out such an ugly little devil, that strangers might imagine my wife was vulgar enough to be jealous of me."

Mademoiselle Minette, however, hastily buttoned Margaret's frock, and down she went: but though Margaret looked far from well, and though mourning was by no means becoming to one, whose naturally good skin had been discoloured into duskiness by the small-pox, yet the flurry she had experienced, had imparted a very pretty glow to her cheeks; and the depreciation of her person by Mr. Davenport was infinitely to her advantage, for the company was prepared to see a fright.

She was not, however, embarrassed by the bold *looks* of a set of fashionable men; for they regarded her with a cold indifference, and their eyes instantly reverted to the good things which were set before them.

This was a *friendly* party: Mrs. Davenport was dressed more in a style of voluptuous coquetry, than in any degree of splendour; but Margaret, whose sight was rather short, thought some other lady had taken the head of the table, and she looked for her benefactress in vain; for Mrs. Davenport had tucked up her beautiful light-brown hair under a wig almost black; till presently, her well-known voice made Margaret turn towards her, and she easily discovered her, by her peculiar and bewitching smile. "Mercy on me, child," exclaimed she, "how you are drawn out. O dear, you must not dress so, when we have only a family dinner at home."

The servants soon began to discover that Miss Marsham could be nothing more than an *humble friend*; they therefore forgot to change her plate: she had to call several times for a glass of water or porter; and not one gentleman had yet asked her to take a glass of wine, till Mrs. Davenport said to her husband, "Henry, I hope you take care of Miss Marsham!" He then coldly asked her, if she chose to take any wine? but calling on another lady to join them, he forgot to fill poor Margaret's glass from the decanter which stood next him, and the cloth was removed before she had half finished her dinner, and she had the prospect before her of starving in the midst of plenty.

After dinner, Mrs. Davenport said, "Do, my dear child, help me to one of those apricots which stand near you: what's your name? Margaret, I think, is not it? It is very ugly."—"My name, ma'am," replied Margaret, "is *Margaritta*."—"Well, that is something rather more tolerable."

A new jargon of fashionable slang then took place, quite inexplicable to the silent Margaret, with a confused kind of dissertation on various public places, which *she* had never been at in her life; and various parties were proposed to the company, but *she* was not included in the invitation. Mrs. Benworth and her daughter sat opposite to Margaret,

and frequently spoke together in a low voice, as they looked towards her, which added to the unpleasantness of her situation.

Mrs. Benworth had been a very fine woman, was a widow, and dearly loved the attentions, and highly estimated the adulation of the opposite sex, though not quite in so innocent a way as Mrs. Davenport; for the mind and ideas of Mrs. Benworth were coarse: though she was always accustomed by birth and fortune, to move in the first circles, and her education having been excellent, her gross defects were only perceptible to those who had known her long.

Miss Benworth was a sly-looking, silent girl, and observed a most mortifying *sang-froid* and distance towards those who sought her notice, especially if she thought them any way her inferiors. Margaret perceiving her a young person, much about the same age with herself, and dressed neat and plain, and the materials of her dress far from costly, thought her some unassuming girl, humble, perhaps, as herself in life; and she smiled at her when she saw her look towards her: but the young lady immediately took off her eyes, without any change in her saturnine countenance, and either applied herself to her dinner or whispered her mother.

When the ladies, about nine o'clock, withdrew to the drawing-room, Mrs. Davenport was deeply engaged, apart, with Mrs. Benworth and her daughter. Margaret was entirely deserted, and left to her own reflections; which so reverted back to the farm at Eglantine, to her father, to her happy, happy sister, and poor Phelim O'Gurphy, that with much difficulty she repressed the tears from starting to her eyes.

Miss Benworth at length rose, and went up to her; asked her if she could play or sing? and gave an audible "Oh! heavens!" when she answered in the negative.

Miss Benworth then addressed Mrs. Davenport, with, "You know, I consider myself at home here, and therefore I will go and shut myself up alone in your music-room, and practise the air of '*Just like Love!*'"—"Do, my darling!" replied Mrs. Davenport.

Now, though the flinty-looking cold-hearted Miss Benworth would have caused the little genial deity to have fled away in disgust, yet she affected to be in raptures at this charming air, which she contrived to sing *scientifically*; but that is not the kind of singing which can touch the heart: O divine Camoens! could thy love-fraught spirit descend to earth, and hear thy breathings of nature and pure passion thus profaned; how wouldst thou despise the wretched beings, who never knew in any degree the flame that animated thy bosom, and which, felt by thee in all its ardency, at length consumed thee, and snapt the fine chord asunder which bound thy soaring spirit to mortality!

\*Miss Benworth played well; but she sang the pathetic air of "*Here's a health to those far away!*" without one single emotion (though she had a brother who expired in the field of honour), and with as much ease and indifference as she would have performed a Scotch reel or an Irish jig.

After the departure of this unfeeling *amateur*, Mrs. Davenport threw herself on the sofa, by Mrs. Benworth, and began a confidential conversation, in a very low voice; but of which Margaret could make out the following sentences:

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*Mrs. Benworth.* \* Well, now, really, my dear Davenport, I cannot think what you see in him to be so infatuated: as for me, when Mr. Benworth was living, (God rest his soul,) if I did cast my eyes of liking on another, I always took care he should be a fine handsome fellow.

*Mrs. Davenport.* Oh! Benworth, you naughty creature! I declare you're too bad! La! my dear, I only like him as a dangler.

*Mrs. Benworth.* Aye, you're a little fool, and ———— and ———— as for him ———— he ———— [Here the ladies whispered.

*Mrs. Davenport.* Well, well, no more of that—my dear creature, he is so fashionable, so exquisite in his taste, and says such sweet things ———— to be sure, I grant he's not young ————

*Mrs. Benworth.* A shrivelled, yellow, poor-looking creature, when I saw him last, not worth any woman giving a thought about.

*Mrs. Davenport.* Oh! but, my love, *you* have not seen him since he came from the country: he is grown fat, and he has now got quite a nice colour—Well, well—say no more; we cannot account for these things, but I really quite love him.

*Mrs. Benworth.* Much good may he do you! But I say, give *me* something more of a *man*!

*Mrs. Davenport.* For instance, the gigantic German, Captain ———, [Here Margaret could not distinguish the name,] or the Prince's highlander! — — — — —

And now, soon Mrs. Davenport, in all the seeming flutter of sixteen, exclaimed, "Here he comes! Oh!

"His very foot has music in't,  
"As he comes up the stair."

A servant then opening the door, announced, to the great astonishment of Margaret,

"SIR CHARLES SEFTON!"

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Dialogue verbatim.*

## CHAP. XVII.

## CHANGES AT EGLANTINE.

Man is but man, inconstant still and various;  
 There's no to-morrow in him like to-day:  
 Perhaps, the atoms floating in his brain  
 Make him think honestly the present hour;  
 The next, a crowd of base inglorious thoughts  
 May mount aloft.

DRYDEN.

ALMOST immediately after the summons he had received, repaired to the farmhouse the son and heir of the late Mr. Marsham. Though his person was somewhat below the middle stature, yet it was graceful and well-proportioned; and if ever countenance was capable of inspiring interest, by its intelligence and its sweet glow of benevolence, such did Matthew Marsham possess, in a degree the most conspicuous. The mingled emotions of sensibility and gratitude now moistened his eyes with a tear; which he quickly wiped away, fearful of observation, and the being accused of hypocrisy, in expressing his regret to the memory of a father whom he had never seen since his days of infancy.

"I fear, sir," said he, addressing the Reverend Edward Marsham, "that I shall make but a very bad farmer; however, my generous father's bequest will render me independent of my present profession, which I embraced more from necessity than choice."

"But in which it is evident," said Edward, "you had great skill, for it is very seldom so young a man should be entrusted with the charge of a regiment, which, I am informed, you obtained\* some years ago."

"Yes, sir," said Matthew, "I had the honour to gain both the applause and friendship of the medical board; but my health was so impaired by the destructive climate I found myself obliged to quit, that I found it absolutely requisite to its preservation, to give up my surgeoncy in the regiment, and repair to England: with what little money I have saved, I hoped, by practising my profession in my native country, to have obtained in a few years a comfortable independency."

Some other desultory conversation then took place, and Edward was delighted with the good sense and acquired literature of his nephew; who, after a pause, with a sweet air of humility, advanced towards him, and respectfully took his hand.—"May I presume, sir," said he, "on this the commencement of our acquaintance, to request a favour of you, which, though to me it is of magnitude, can by you be easily performed: it is, that you would never quit me; but hold the same place in this habitation, as you did with my generous father. Oh! sir, suffer me not to find that I enter here as the illegitimate destroyer of your rights, usurping, in a manner, the dwelling of your ancestors; as one who chases you from your long-accustomed home, to seek another! Consider, I intreat of you, oh! yet consider all *my* servants as your *own*: and do not make me miserable, by refusing this humble request."

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\**Historique.*

“Be assured,” replied Edward, “I feel all the value of your generous proposal; but I estimate more the *intrinsic* value of possessing and taking to my heart a relation like yourself: my eldest daughter is married to a man of rank and fortune; who, on the opening of my late brother’s will, insisted that I should hereafter make his house my home; my promise is therefore given, and I hope,” added he, with a smile, “that you will people these numerous apartments better than your father did, and that it will be no longer “Bachelor’s Hall.”

Though the countenance of the interesting Matthew had become rather pallid from his long sojournment in the unhealthy climate of St. Lucia, yet now a deep crimson mantled over it, and the ill-represt sigh which heaved his bosom, discovered the secret to Edward, that love had already planted his arrows in the heart of his nephew.

After this unlooked-for relative had been announced in the will of her uncle, and whom, when he presented himself, no one could help loving, Mary had felt herself happy that it was in *her* power to afford her revered and much-loved parent a comfortable asylum: the instant offer of her Frederic to that effect had delighted her beyond measure, and she even promised herself that yet better days awaited all her family than any they had heretofore experienced: she knew how dearly her father loved her; she knew how happy he would be when always in her society; and the ease and elegance in which she lived in her rural residence would ensure him many comforts which he had never known at the farm. Her sister was amply provided for: she was the *protégée* of a woman, not only possessed of an immense fortune, but of a sweet temper and an excellent heart—*she* would *never*, endowed with these two *last* valuable gifts, forsake her; of that, this affectionate sister felt assured. It was true, she herself had experienced some change in the temper and manners of Mr. Harrington, but that she might naturally expect; she was not to imagine an *husband* would be always a *lover*!

Thus argued the inexperienced Mary, who, though she endeavoured to be cheerful and contented, could not make the last reflection without a tear: she tried to persuade herself that it was only the effect of her low spirits on the recent death of her uncle Ralph; oh! no,—they had been just highly elated by news from her favourite and happy uncle Charles; who had described in glowing colours the success of the British arms at Flushing: and she had rejoiced at, and blessed a protecting Providence, that this her dear uncle was safe and unhurt, beloved and favoured by all his superior officers. Poor Mary! she banished the thought from her mind, that her Frederic was not the same as formerly, yet it *would* intrude, and it *would* bring the little crystal trembler to her eye.

She endeavoured to drive it away with the thoughts of her sister’s promised happiness; but her sister was neither happy nor safe under Mrs. Davenport’s protection; who, though she took her *as her own*, did not mean to leave her a shilling! such an idea had never entered her head.

Mrs. Davenport had often that much-abused epithet bestowed upon her, of possessing an excellent heart; but it was in her neither the seat of feeling or affection, and her mind, if mind she had any, was swayed only by the dictates of fashion, or the customs and opinions of those higher in rank than herself.

But this Mary knew not, and in the contemplation of her sister’s good fortune, her thoughts again reverted to her father, and she cheerfully tripped up stairs to the

apartments allotted to him; and her filial affection, aided by her natural taste, embellished his dressing-room with various articles and devices of modern elegance.

Frederic Harrington began, already, to pant for change; the fatal accident that had happened, the close mourning of his wife, and her near affinity to the deceased, would render it quite contrary to the rules of established *etiquette*, for her to make her public appearance for two or three months at least: what a delightful opportunity for him to take an unrestrained swing of fashionable pleasure! It is true he was in deep mourning also, but the late Mr. Marsham was only allied to him by marriage: he could very well urge that change of air and scene was absolutely requisite to the recovery of his health: he meant therefore to be very attentive and polite to the present owner of Eglantine farm; whose medical skill was much thought of, and to whom Frederic meant to impart the idea of how very much he felt the want of a more salubrious air.

The morning of that day, in which Mr. Marsham meant to take up his abode at Mr. Harrington's cottage *ornée*, he walked out with his nephew, to whom he began to feel himself very much attached, to pay a few morning visits: Edward, to return those of kind condolence he had received from his neighbours, and a few others of ceremony, to introduce Mr. Matthew Marsham to their notice.

Lady Wringham had sent a verbal message, by her servant, on the news of Mr. Ralph Marsham's sudden death, with her offers of *sarvice* to the family.

Mr. Marsham therefore called at Sir John's, but heard the voice of her ladyship at the top of the stairs, saying, "Not at home, I told you, blockhead! (addressing the servant, who had previously told the Curate his lady *was* at home); and, as she retreated to her dressing-room, they plainly heard her utter something about, "Such a *clergyman* indeed! encouraging his brother's *bastards!*"

They then hastened to the cottage of that charming old lady, Mrs. Susanna Bradbury, and were by her and her lovely niece greeted with unfeigned politeness and cordiality; but it needed but a very small portion of penetration to discover that it was not the *first* interview between Matthew Marsham and Lucy Ringwood.

Elated and happy, Matthew accompanied his uncle home; but as they walked along, seldom answered him to the purpose, except it was to acquiesce in Mrs. Susan Bradbury's being the most delightful old woman ever seen; though it was plain enough to perceive, that not the *old* woman, but the *young* one was the object of Matthew's attention; for towards Mrs. Susan he had scarcely ever looked during the whole of their visit, and no one ever found themselves able to make a *short* one to Mrs. Susanna.

The poor faithful Irish servant, Phelim O'Gurphy, could not endure the sight of this *misbegotten* intruder, as he called him, at the farm; and took care always to be out of the way, if Mr. Matthew Marsham wanted his services. Edward was surprised on this day of his intended departure for his daughter's cottage, to see the poor fellow enter his chamber, crying and sobbing, as if his heart would break; "Och!" said he, "and is poor Phelim come to see this day? When the brother of my late dear master, and the same mother's son with himself, should go out of his own lawful dwelling, to make room for an unlawful child! and perhaps his mother might be no better than old Peg Plunkett of Dublin."

"If you wish to preserve my favour and friendship," said Edward, gravely, "I insist upon it, that I never hear you utter a word of disrespect against the mother of that



excellent young man, who I am sure will make one of the kindest of masters to you all, while you behave well.”—“Och! but I am sure,” said Phelim, “and he’ll never be *my* master.”—“Know when you are well off,” said Edward, “and do not, be a ridiculous folly, and misplaced zeal towards me, throw yourself out of a situation, in which I am certain you will be truly comfortable.”—“No, no, sir, there is no comfort left for poor Phelim, unless you consent to keep him for your own servant.”

“That is impossible, my good lad, I never, since I have been in my brother’s house, kept a servant of my own; and I am sure I shall not now.”—“Och! sir,” urged the yet weeping O’Gurphy, “I want no wages, I have saved a little bit of money since I lived with your own dear brother,—I want nothing of you, but for the love of J——s, sir, pray let me go with you. I cannot, I cannot stay about the farm when you have left it.”

“But, my good fellow,” said Edward, much affected, “I cannot take you to Mr. Harrington’s, their house is full of servants; and what would my son and daughter think, if I, who will want, in their establishment, for no attention, of any kind whatever, should be so whimsical as to incumber them with *my own servant*?”

“Sir,” said the persevering Phelim, “will your honour give me leave to *spake* one word to Mr. Harrington *alone*, by *mine own self*?”—“By no means, you will for ever offend me, if you do; make yourself easy and contented: your present master will soon render you so, if it is not your own fault.”—“The devil set fire to me, if ever he shall be a master of mine!”—“Fie on you, Phelim,” said Edward, scarce able to keep his countenance, “let me hear no swearing, of any kind;” but finding his son-in-law was below, he hastened down stairs. Phelim followed, and almost began the renowned howl of his country, crying out, “Och, and can you be after leaving me, now?”—“What is the matter, my dear sir,” said Harrington, “are you inflicting *corporeal* as well as spiritual chastisement on your servant?”—“No, neither,” said Edward, “but I cannot get rid of him; I believe he will throw me down stairs;” for Phelim had fastened himself to the skirts of Mr. Marsham’s coat; who was at length compelled to explain this ludicrous scene to Mr. Harrington, whose heart, naturally good, ever alive to, and actuated by good-nature, and ever ready to appreciate the genuine feelings of honesty and attachment, insisted that the faithful Hibernian should be retained at the cottage as the Reverend Mr. Marsham’s servant.

The affliction of Phelim was now succeeded by joy as tumultuous as it was unfeigned: and so often did he quaff the *nectarous* fluid of strong, home-brewed ale, to the health of his master, and the long-life and happiness of the noble Mr. Harrington and his beautiful lady, that Phelim, when he accompanied the Reverend Edward Marsham to the cottage, was completely intoxicated.

As he followed his master along a very wide path-way, which, however, was not *sufficiently* wide, for the space he took, by his frequent reeling from one side to the other, they met, as they walked in this guise, Sir John and Lady Wringham taking an evening walk. “I declare,” said she, as loud as she could, “if there *isn’t some* parsons who *deserves* to have their gowns stripped over their ears; first they *encourages filthy bastardy*, and next drunkenness: do but look at that nasty, Irish fellow, as *drunk as a sow*; and I dare say the master is not much better.”

Edward heard her, in all the silence of contempt; for he was happy to find that his attendant, brimful of joy, as well as of liquor, was too absorbed in the reveries, which the

delightful accomplishment of his wishes had suffered to float in his muddled brain; else, no doubt, but the “sprig, of shilleghlah,” which he grasped, would, in his present maddened state of mind, had he heard her ladyship, been applied to the *little* support, on which she leaned her weighty arm; in spite of his baronetage, or all the boasted wealth and honours of the past, present, and future race of the Wringhams.

Edward knew that all lectureship, in the present state of his servant, would be not only useless, but misunderstood; he therefore requested his son-in-law to order *his* servant to put him to bed, and reserved his own wise and mild exhortations till the morrow.

In a few days, Mr. Harrington became extremely intimate with the late Mr. Marsham’s acknowledged son: his views, it is true, at first, were somewhat selfish, as he wished to render Matthew his vehicle, to obtain an emancipation, for a short period, from the fetters of *matrimonial sameness!*

But never did Frederic feel more gratification, than in his acquaintance with this amiable young man: how unlike the tumultuous and momentary friendship he had formed with the Leslies? and yet Harrington, though a virtuous esteem seemed taking firm root in his bosom for one possessed of sense, manly refinement, with excellence of heart and understanding; and though the wavering Frederic was in full and undisputed possession of all the warm and uncontaminated affection of a virtuous mind, enshrined in a form the most captivating and lovely; yet, ah! that form, which he pressed to his bosom, the virtues, the attractions he daily and hourly witnessed, were, alas! only those of A WIFE!

His newly-acquired and much-esteemed friend was a country neighbour, who resided very near to him, and whom he could see at all times; so he could the wife of his fondest choice, and the reverend parent whom he loved and honoured: the sigh of discontent then often escaped him, and wafted with it, his wishes for the pleasures of the gay world; and he languished to take his accustomed round in the scenes of fashionable dissipation. Oh! how little prized are pure and tranquil pleasures, by the high-born and thoughtless votaries of wealth and splendour! Oh! wayward man, how eager art thou to rush on to thine own ruin, and to implant in thy breast the bitter, lasting, but *unavailing* thorns of remorse!

Frederic Harrington took care not to say the true cause of his wishing for a change of scene; but told Mr. Matthew Marsham that he had been always so accustomed to autumnal sea-bathings, at the different watering-places, that he really felt this custom had become an absolute requisite towards the preservation of his health. Matthew could urge nothing against what appeared so reasonable and what he had always found, in the course of his profession, extremely sanative: he therefore readily acquiesced.

Mary expected that her Frederic would have been solicitous of her accompanying him; but she soon found her mistake, by his telling her he should be only absent for a very short period; and that he was happy to leave her father with her, to alleviate and shorten her hours of solitude; that, by the time he returned, she would have enlivened the deep gloom of her sables, and they would then make their appearance in London. Mary heard in silence, and but ill-represt her tears; her bosom heaved with the agitation of stifled sorrow, and her cheek turned pale: for as Mr. Harrington had fixed on Cromer, in Norfolk, for his bathing-place, she thought, although it had become, in some degree, a fashionable resort, yet it might be made, to those who wished it to be so, a very retired

residence; and her *sables* had only furnished an excuse for her husband to depart without her.

When Charles Marsham quitted the farm-house, Mary had experienced a cruel agony of heart, and she then thought that such an extent of affliction she could never feel again: but how much more keen did she feel this separation! when she wept, for she could not help weeping on the bosom of a beloved husband, and saw him depart from her, not only with dry eyes, but with a visible emotion of pleasure, which he knew not how to conceal; for Frederic Harrington, with all his faults, had no dissimulation about him.

Those who have heard the dead sound of an hearse, as it carried from the door the last remains of a friend, dearly and tenderly beloved, can only form to themselves what were the feelings of this affectionate wife, as she heard the wheels of her Frederic's post-chaise drive from the cottage-gate; for not an hearse departing in all its still pomp of sable woe, could more sink the heart with the leaded weight of grief, than the swift and rattling sound of Harrington's travelling carriage did that of his Mary, at the moment of his departure.

Ashamed that her father should witness her tears, she hastened to her chamber; and locking herself in, gave way to the indulgence of a sorrow she at length blamed herself for, and could not help almost thinking ridiculous: she dressed herself, and assumed what cheerfulness she could at dinner, till her father drank the health of Mr. Harrington, as they were taking their dessert. He gently chid her for being so childish, as not being able to bear her husband out of her sight, whose intended stay was but for a very short period, and who had promised to write to her by every post.

"We are capricious beings, my love," added Edward, "too apt to undervalue the blessing, which is always in our undisputed possession. Let Mr. Harrington always find you a kind, obliging and grateful wife; welcome him, ever, with cheerfulness: but if you shew yourself *too* fond of him, depend upon it, such is the ingratitude of our sex, that his love for you will *decrease* in proportion as he observes the *increase* of that excessive fondness in you; for, by a visible anxiety to keep him always in your sight, you will make him only particularly desirous of being out of it, and shewing himself oft in company, where he would rather, perhaps, you did not make a part."

Mary, though she could not restrain her tears, and which this last sentence of her father had caused to stream afresh, yet promised, and secretly resolved to keep the promise, of adopting that line of conduct, which he had marked out for her. The next day her heart was comforted by a most kind and affectionate letter from her Frederic; the succeeding ones made her equally happy; she perceived no diminution of his tenderness, and, wrapped up in fancied security of his unaltered love, she grew gay and cheerful, and passed her easy hours in the society of the friends she valued and esteemed.

Lucy Ringwood, the companion of her earliest years, was dear to her, as a sister; but she could not accept Mary's invitation of remaining with her during the absence of Mr. Harrington, as she could not leave her beloved aunt alone; but a day seldom past, in which these three friends did not mutually visit each other: on those occasions, when Mrs. Susanna Bradbury was of the party, Lucy generally stole from them for about an hour or more, which filled the minds of the two ladies with various surmises; though neither spake her thoughts to the other.

Edward, more and more delighted with his nephew, often left the female trio to converse, not *always* on the requisite arrangement of dress and fashion, but often on those slight, mental accomplishments, which are peculiarly adapted to their sex, and in which the masculine understanding, however great its superiority, sometimes finds itself, in brilliancy and quickness of idea, outdone.

On those occasions, Edward repaired to the farm; and one day he found his, generally, sprightly nephew in a *serious*, and indeed a *melting* mood; for his humid eyes rested on a packet of papers which lay before him: these, he said, he had been just developing the contents of, and presenting the packet to the Curate, he desired him to take it home with him, and peruse it at his leisure.

END OF VOL. II.

ROMANCE READERS

AND

ROMANCE WRITERS.

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ROMANCE READERS

AND

ROMANCE WRITERS:

A Satirical Novel.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
'A PRIVATE HISTORY OF THE COURT OF ENGLAND, &C.'

GNATHO. *Quid agitur?*

PARMENO. *Statur.*

GANTHO. *Video.*

*Numquid nam hic, quod nolis, vides?*

PARMENO. *Te.*

GNATHO. *Crede.*

TERENCE.

M.G. LEWIS, ROSA MATILDA, HORSLEY

CURTIES, &c. *parlent.*

*Hélas, mon Dieu, craignez tout d'un auteur en courroux,*

*Qui peut——* BOILEAU.

VOL III.

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1810.

EFFECTS  
OF  
ROMANCE READING.

CHAP. XVIII.

A JOURNEY AND AN UNEXPECTED  
MEETING.

I saw her breast with every passion heave—  
I left her; . . . . .  
Oh! my hard bosom that could *bear* to leave!  
SHENSTONE.

The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,  
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays;  
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.  
MILTON.

FREDERIC HARRINGTON had not yet ceased to love his Mary with ardour, when he threw himself into the post-chaise, which bore him from his cottage; he at first felt all the delight of emancipation, but he had not proceeded many miles before he found a void in his breast, and Mary presented herself to his fancy in all the sweet attractive influence of her lovely form.

Every pleasant scene recalled her to his imagination, and on every one of nature's lovely views which he beheld as he passed through the country, he wanted his beloved and constant companion to partake of his pleasure; and as there was a great similarity in their tastes for rural landscapes, he wished *her* present, that they might mutually make their remarks to each other.

Just before he arrived at the inn, where he meant to stop for dinner, so sincerely did he regret the loss of his Mary's society, that he was almost determined to take post-horses back, and request her to accompany him on his little excursion: but how ridiculous and how capricious he would look! and still worse, what a *petticoat-governed* husband! for Mary might mention among their acquaintance her agreeable surprise at his coming back for her: it would never do!—no, he would write for her—that would be as bad: his letter would always tell against him; it would give her and her family unbounded sway over him.

Harrington was a man of the world; he was, indeed, in some respects the world's slave—and Mary was doomed to stay where she was.

He ate for his dinner a morsel of fish, and the roast fowl went away untouched: he tossed off three or four glasses of port, and his thoughts about Mary seemed drowned in

the last: he, therefore, leaped into the chaise, with a jocund air, and promised to make himself amends at supper.

He nodded in the chaise; and a dream brought his beloved Mary again by his side: he cursed his stars when he awoke, that she was not *really* there; and as the setting sun shot its departing rays over the heath, he dropped a few tears at the idea of his Mary—left alone! He recalled her tender farewell—he execrated his own folly! while fashion, and fashion's pleasures appeared poor indeed, when put in competition with her.

But, as he stopped to supper, the remembrance of his wife, his blissful cottage, his happy wedded state, vanished at one instant, and swift as the lightning's flash. Some of his former dashing companions were at the inn; renowned members of the whip-club, who had just been taking their dinner there; and were all getting completely forward in the service of the god of wine.

They all hailed him by the title of "Benedick, the married man!" but hoped he had not become a *sober-sides*; they applauded him for his courage, in so soon breaking his fetters, though composed only of the roses and myrtle of love; and added, that however charming was the pretty little *grisette* he had married, yet he did right to let her know in time how he meant to act.

Mr. Harrington, however, did not look well pleased, to hear his wife denominated a *grisette*! and he repeated the term in that way which shewed he was offended. "Nay, d—n it!" said Lord Armitage, "it was only what we heard: come, come, you shall not be sparring with *us*—we'll have no more duels; Mrs. Harrington must ever challenge our sincere respect, as *your* wife; and forgive, I beseech you, us set of choice spirits, if we chanced to make use of an improper term: why, my buck, you and I have been old fellow school-mates! a fig for all women, be they wives, maids, or widows! Come, we must initiate you in the rules of our club! our favourites\* are of the four-legged breed; we toast none of your capricious females, either of town or country—but pass about the bottle to *Frolicksome Fan, Betty slim-legs, Jack the Crop, and Jemmy Twitcher*; all quadruped favourites of the whipping sport—four-in-hand, my fine fellow, four-in-hand! that's the present order of the day. I made a figure of eight\* this morning five times going; won two hundred pounds of Ned Needham; look, how *glum* he sits there at the corner of the table!"

Harrington could not forbear laughing at the rattling peer; and taking his seat amongst them, he took a couple of glasses of champagne with them, and then bespoke an expensive supper for them all. The orgies of Bacchus continued till the dawn of the next morning, and they all reeled off to their several chambers, declaring Harrington the finest fellow in the world; and that, if they were sure matrimony would spoil them, no more than it did him, they would all set off on the morrow, in search of some rich dowager, to help to support the expences of the *whip*!

Before Frederic rose to breakfast his boisterous companions had departed; and a violent head-ach prevented him from finishing his journey that day: he could not help contrasting the scene he had just witnessed, and in which he had borne a part, with the tranquil and self-approving pleasures of his dear cottage; and he penned that first tender letter to Mary, which she received with so much delight.

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*



He arrived early the next morning at his place of destination: the beautiful and picturesque situation of Cromer again made him wish for Mary, to participate in the sublime kind of pleasure which it imparted to his mind. He did not bathe that day, but returned to his inn; and in the evening dressed himself, and took a walk, at the going out of the tide, to observe with an awe-felt curiosity, if he could perceive any vestiges of a part of the old town and church that were overwhelmed by an influx of the sea a considerable number of years since\*.

As he walked onwards, a very elegant female passed him, leaning on the arm of an officer; the gentleman appeared a veteran, had been handsome, and bore about him that evident look of gallantry which shewed he had been *un homme aux bonnes fortunes* in his day.

There was a dignity in his appearance which bespoke him of rank in his profession, and a kind of air which thoroughly marked the man of high birth. The form of the lady was not only elegant, but was exquisitely fine: what little Frederic could see of her face, which was much hid by a lace veil, appeared young and very beautiful; Frederic fancied he had seen one like it, though he had now so very partial a view of that which was almost hid, as the lady passed him: however, the old town, the church, all was forgot, in this more lovely and modern piece of divine workmanship.

Frederic retired to his lodgings; and a sentiment beyond curiosity actuated the whole of his thoughts and ideas. The evening was sultry, he threw up the sash, and seated himself to enjoy a moonlight scene of uncommon beauty, and which, in another frame of mind, would have recalled all his forsaken pleasures of rural life; but now, not one inmate of his cottage shot their calm remembrance across his agitated heart.

Several carriages passed by in hurried succession: he called up his landlady, and asked her what it meant? "They are going to the assembly, sir," said she; "there is a grand ball and supper given there to-night by the great general, Lord Fenwater, to the officers of a regiment, who arrived here last week: I forget the name of the regiment, for we have such a *power* of soldiers now coming, one after the other, all round the coast, that I am sure it so bewilders my poor brains that I do not know the one from the other! Ah, Lord help us! sir, the General is old enough, I believe, to be your grandfather: but I am sure he is turned fool; saving your presence, sir, for speaking so of any gentleman; and is fallen in love with a beautiful young creature in the regiment; and it's all along with *she*, that he gives this fine ball and supper: for I heard say as how *he* should say once, that he hated that there regiment, and called them all a set of *scamps*! I think was his word; and he said the officers' wives were all no better than a *fusty* set of old maids."

"Lord Fenwater!" exclaimed Frederic, who, though he was weary of the good dame's prolixity, yet wanted to hear more, as he was now convinced that this was the nobleman he had seen in the morning with this lovely unknown. "Sit down, my good madam," continued Frederic, "and do tell me about this inconsiderate old peer, of whom I know very little, only that he is a friend of my uncle's, with whom I once saw him."

"Why, sir, I must say, I does not know much good of him; for this lady is another man's wife, and she is married to a very handsome young man; and I am told, it was quite a love-match on both sides: now, sir, as I said before, though she is as beautiful a creature as ever I clapped my eyes upon, yet I say, *handsome is, that handsome does*; and she does

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\* *Historique.*

not *do* very handsomely, to give the General every encouragement; she does not care one fig for her husband; nay, she left him one day on a sick bed, to drive out with the General in his *phaeton*."

"What is the lady's name?" said Frederic, with an ill-assumed indifference. "I declare I almost forget, replied the landlady, "but I think it is Lady Arabella Hammond, or somewhat very much like it."—A loud knocking at the door put a period to this dialogue, and a kind of consequential voice demanded if Mr. Harrington did not lodge there? and, in the space of a moment, jumped up-stairs, at three steps, the Honourable Mr. Lawson, an old fellow-collegian, and intimate friend of the gay Frederic.

"Why, what in the d——l's name, Fred," said Lawson, "is it I have heard? I am told you are married! and yet not wedded to the dear dashing female who so much captivated you, and whom every one declared was expressly made for you; that resplendent beauty, the Isabella Emerson! Come, where's the bewitching creature that has transplanted her? and whom you have honoured by dubbing Mrs. Harrington! cannot one have a peep at her? or do you keep her locked up in a glass case, for fear any one should touch her?"

"Mrs. Harrington is not with me," replied Frederic, half abashed; inwardly vexed at his hasty marriage, yet rejoiced to see his friend; and almost wishing that he *had* married a female of Lady Isabella's shining and fashionable exterior. "*Bravo! Bravissimo!*" said Lawson; "well, now this is something like a modern husband; broke your fetters already! hang me, if I do not believe you have united yourself to some rich dowager of quality, who has with you made the delightful, mutual compact, of letting each act as shall best please the other." "No such thing," said Frederic; "let us, for a moment, dear friend, be serious; I have married a young girl, whose *lovely* person is far inferior to all her other attractions! her face and form, all charming as they are, sink into nothing, when compared with the virtues of her pure and spotless mind! and—" "Whew!" interrupted Lawson, "how long will this fit be upon you? Do not you recollect, my dear fellow, that I always compared your mind to a rainbow? a charming diversity of sentiment coloured it, but yet only *tinged* it, like that beautiful arch; for it could boast equal instability: its firmness was as easily dissolved by the tears of impulsive mistaken sensibility, as its brighter hues were, at other times, obscured by a shower of intemperance, or by an accidental dark cloud of gravity, which might throw a shadow over it: while the bright sun of pleasure has triumphed in its splendour; and the sentimental tints of Frederic Harrington's *rainbow* were all lost!"

"Have you done?" said Harrington, smiling; "or is this a part of some old theme that was given you when at Oxford? Come, a truce to metaphor;—pray why are you thus accoutered? upon my honour, *vous êtes bravement équipé!*"

"Yes, yes," said Lawson; "a truce, my dear fellow, to every thing but present pleasure: I have a ticket from the amorous old General, Lord Fenwater, to a ball he gives this evening: with this ticket I received a very polite note, earnestly requesting me to attend, and to bring with me any friend I thought proper: hasten then to thy toilette, thou Adonis, formed to please the fair; forget thou art married, and equip thyself to accompany me."

Harrington was soon persuaded; away they drove to the assembly-room: Frederic Harrington more elegant, infinitely more pleasing and interesting than when in full health,

derived new attractive powers from his suit of mourning; and in this guise he entered the ball-room.

Thus interesting, thus attractive, the first object which met his eyes, increased in loveliness with every auxiliary of the most tasteful and superb attire, was Lady Isabella Raymond!

She was seated on a sofa at the upper end of the room, behind which gracefully leaned the fine martial figure of the General, who was dealing out to her all the pretty compliments of gallantry which he had practised for thirty years amongst twice that number of different females. Lawson advanced towards him with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance, and waving his hand towards Frederic, he said, "Permit me, my lord, to introduce my friend, Mr. Harrington, to your notice." "I have had the honour of seeing Mr. Harrington before, with his worthy uncle, Sir Edward," said the General, with visible coldness; his penetrating eye having observed the changes and emotion of Lady Isabella's and Harrington's countenances. Frederic, however, on the invitation of her ladyship, which was given with all the *nonchalance* she could assume, threw himself gracefully on the vacant seat beside her. "Ah! ah!" said Lawson, "Lady Isabella, do you know my *quondam* friend with his pale visage, and garb of woe?" "Oh!" replied she, "he is not under so dark a cloud but that I can discover him." This she uttered with a vain attempt to be sprightly; and the vanity of Harrington was gratified at perceiving the evident tremor of her heart, as her eyes met his: a rapidity of ideas thronged in quick succession upon her mind, and made her answers to every question that was put to her, vague, and from the purpose.

Hilarity, content, self-approbation, which were the inmates of many a bosom, and had sat smiling on the outward countenance, had all fled at the appearance of the intruder, Harrington: the men all envied him, and wished him any where but there; for every lady was exclaiming, in one general buz of whispers, "What a handsome man!"

The general had been content to the utmost with the good humour of his goddess\*, whose superb set of brilliants, and whose guinea-and-a-half *bouquet* of choice exotics, had been presented to her by him in the morning, and for which she had amply repaid him by her bewitching smiles in the evening; she had also declared she would not dance that night, because his lordship no longer skipped in the train of Terpsichore: no, she preferred regaling herself with that mental feast, the charms of his conversation!

Now he saw her not only delighted with the handsome intrusive guest, but he heard her say that she would certainly go down a dance or two with him in the course of the evening: but Lady Isabella's mind was in a state of cruel agitation; she feared, she hoped, and lamented: she knew that Frederic Harrington had married Mary Marsham; but on her removal from the quarters she had first occupied with her husband, she knew not of Mr. Ralph Marsham's fatal accident: the mourning of Harrington was deep; he might, perhaps, be a widower! she had heard Mrs. Harrington was thought to be consumptive. "Oh! if he was a widower, then was she a wretch indeed; she was married to a man she began to detest:" then again she thought that Harrington would not dance if he was so *recent* a widower. She therefore felt all her hatred return towards Mary, and feared her superior attractions; but yet she hoped, fondly hoped, he still loved herself: and Frederic Harrington was sure, at that moment, he loved her ladyship more than any woman he had

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\* *Historique.*

ever yet seen; he felt all that ardour of fond desire return in her presence, which is so often dignified by, and mistaken for the pure passion of love; and when she ventured to ask him after the health of Mrs. Harrington, he stammered out that she was well, blushed and hung down his head, while he inwardly cursed his precipitate marriage; “This woman,” thought he, “this resplendent beauty, who does honour to a court by her appearance, might have been mine!” and rashly and guiltily did he mentally vow that she should be his; for he fancied it impossible to endure life without the possession of her charming person.

About twelve o’clock Major Raymond made his appearance; he was much altered in person for the worse, and wore the evident marks on his countenance of severe embarrassment; his mien was altogether dejected, and his spirits forced; he advanced towards the proud Frederic with a freedom which that gentleman by no means approved, who never much liked Major Raymond, and who now felt for him every symptom of hatred, particularly for his being the legal possessor of the fair enchantress who sat beside him.

Lady Isabella Raymond, from her pecuniary embarrassments, had been tempted to listen to the gallant compliments, and receive the pointed attentions of Lord Fenwater\*; whose proverbial munificence was such, to the fair ones he admired, that she flattered herself it would soon disperse the numerous swarm of creditors who continually assailed her husband’s quarters: but Lady Isabella knew not a fourth part of the extent and enormity of their claims.

Dislike to her, as well as indifference, had taken place in the Major’s bosom of all that violent and ardent affection he had once felt for her; and he winked at the too palpable attachment of the General; partook, with a blind connivance, of all the festivities given in honour of his wife; encouraged her in accepting the wealthy lover’s presents; drank copiously of the rare foreign wines with which the General supplied his cellar; while a speedy\* promotion to a lieutenant-colonelcy, through his lordship’s interest, danced, in gay vision, before his eyes. But now the torch of love was kindled again, with added fire, in the breast of her ladyship, by the fine person of Frederic Harrington; the electric spark of which beamed from her eyes, and inspired Frederic with mutual passion.

Love gave softness and additional animation to one of the most beautiful countenances in the world; fashion, and native original wit, now emulous only to please, and wholly free from satire and ill-nature, rendered her conversation irresistible; profound sense and acquired accomplishments united their seductive force, and Harrington was more firmly her captive than ever.

The General now saw, and left the field to the more fortunate and irresistible conqueror. A single state, abundant wealth, a person yet handsome, and a title, he knew would ever give him the power of purchasing beauty in all her most brilliant attractions.

Frederic Harrington knew not yet the pecuniary embarrassments of the Raymonds; and thus, though “*feasts and tournaments*” might be given, to please the beautiful dame, yet valuable presents flowed not in so amply as when the more aged lover was the

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

experienced and devoted slave, who, much to the surprise of the Major, had quitted Cromer in a kind of haughty despair; he soon, however, in the unguarded conduct of his Isabella and the imprudent Harrington, saw the cause, and was vile enough to resolve to profit by it.

Sorry we are to record, that, though Frederic Harrington had been married scarce three *little months*, the fascinations of the syren he unhappily fell in with so wrought on his wavering disposition, that he became a criminal husband, and Lady Isabella a guilty wife!

In a moment of tender confidence, she revealed to him the burthened state of their pecuniary affairs: the mind of the mistaken Frederic was horror-struck, and he resolved to mortgage every acre of his estate sooner than see the woman he loved, almost to idolatry, in distress: but Major Raymond, knowing the ample fortune of Frederic, gave every opportunity to the criminal lovers, and meditated more *public* means of retrieving his shattered circumstances, and meant to spare the thoughtless Harrington the trouble of so incumbering his estate.

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## CHAP. XIX.

FASHIONABLE INTRIGUE, AND A VIRTUOUS  
WIFE'S RESOURCE.

O ye woods! spread your branches apace,  
 To your deepest recesses I fly;  
 I would hide with the beasts of the chace,  
 I would vanish from every eye.

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Yet my reed shall resound through the grove,  
 With the same sad compliment it begun:  
 How *he* smil'd, and *she* could not but love,  
 Was faithless, and *she is* undone."

SHENSTONE.

LEAVING the faithless Harrington to his guilty, and as he fondly imagined, *secure* pursuit of lawless pleasure, we must revert to the virtuous inhabitants of his forsaken home, and trace back our history to that period which told near a fortnight after his departure.

Mary, till her Frederic ceased to write to her often, and till a forced kind of tenderness, and cold expressions in his letters, made her wretched, had been reconciled in some degree to her state of separation from him she held most dear, and she passed her hours in cheerful content; while her father's chief occupation was studying politics, and groaning over the newspapers at the ill success of our continental expeditions.

Lord Fenwater, on his departure from Cromer, visited town for a few days; where, to his surprise, he met Sir Edward Harrington; but he imparted more astonishment to the mind of Sir Edward, when he informed him that his nephew, from whom he had not heard for some time, was at Cromer! And when Sir Edward, not without a faint blush, asked Lord Fenwater, if he, who was such an admirer of female beauty, had seen his pretty niece? and was told Mr. Harrington was there without her, a degree of indignation accompanied his wonder, which was by no means lessened by the sly inuendos of the disappointed peer, who enjoyed the mischief he discovered he had made with a splenetic malevolence.

The heart of Sir Edward Harrington, however education and high birth might have fed a natural pride of family, was yet goodness itself; and he now felt keenly for the blooming young creature, whose amiability had often charmed him, and whose virtue he revered: he wrote to his thoughtless nephew to quit the society of a woman whom he had ever deemed most unprincipled and dangerous, and an adept in every seductive artifice; alleging, that he flattered himself *his* presence would be some inducement for his quick return, as he meant to finish the summer at his cottage; whither he was going to repair immediately.

The admonitory letter was at first scoffingly thrown on one side; he had not then possessed the person of his bewitching Isabella; he was on the bright eve of expectation, and should he quit such a prize, in view, for the insipid caresses of a virtuous wife?

Such were the impulsive thoughts of the deluded Frederic; but on cooler reflection he wrote a flattering answer to his uncle, saying, he should instantly repair home as soon as ever the physician who attended him would give him leave to quit the sea; then he would, on the wings of love, fly to his much-loved home, and dearly-revered uncle.

Sir Edward, at first, was the dupe of these hyperbolic expressions, but his silence afterwards, with his constrained letters to his charming wife, made the worthy baronet dread the worst.

How delighted were the good Curate and his daughter at beholding this excellent man! who advanced, with a sweet cordiality, to embrace his niece, and whom he now regarded with the fondest paternal interest. He was resolved to make her ample amends for any coldness he might hitherto have shewn her; and that she should solely occupy that place in his affections so long held by his worthless nephew.

One fine autumnal morning, as he was walking in the romantic and extensive garden which belonged to the cottage, he listened with enthusiastic pleasure to the most exquisite voice which had ever met his ear: the air it sung was plaintive, the peculiar harmony of it was wafted with the morning breeze to the place where he had seated himself; and Sir Edward, who was passionately fond of music, listened with that mute attention which dreaded to give way, even to his own respiration, lest it should destroy one melodious note of a songstress whose warbling seemed almost celestial.

The voice seemed to proceed from a little Chinese pavilion near the end of the garden; Sir Edward rose in order to direct his steps thither; but a servant coming to inform him that breakfast was ready, prevented him: the servant then turned down another *allée*; the voice soon ceased, and Sir Edward walked slowly to the house; where he found seated to receive him, at their morning repast, Mr. Marsham and his daughter.

“Some spirit of the air surely haunts your gardens,” said the baronet, “what vocal genii preside over the place? the voice of a seraph seemed to regale my ears this morning, and appeared to proceed from the Chinese pavilion.” Edward smiled, while Mary blushed deeply; but recovering herself, she said, “Oh! Sir Edward, you have lived, I see, too long in a court; flattery in that hemisphere is natural to you all, for even Sir Edward Harrington makes use of the destructive ingredient?” “How flattery?” replied Sir Edward; “what, by saying I thought *your* cottage-garden attended by genii?” “No, no, Sir Edward,” said Mr. Marsham, “it was my daughter you heard, she was singing a favourite air which Mr. Harrington taught her; indeed, I believe the words are his own, though set to an old tune.” “Your daughter! why I found her at the tea-table when I entered.”

“Yes,” said Mr. Marsham, “she came in, sir, by a nearer way than you did.” “Dear sir,” said the embarrassed Mary, “why say any more about it? Sir Edward, I am sure, must have seen me, and is now only quizzing me.” “Pardon me, my love,” said Sir Edward, “you know there is nothing I so much despise as that fashionable propensity: but, pray tell me, has your charming voice, with so just an ear as I find you possess, never had any cultivation?” “No, sir,” replied Mary, “my father and uncles little thought I should ever fill the elevated situation I now hold, as the wife of Mr. Harrington, and the acknowledged niece of Sir Edward: and my husband says I am now too old to learn.”

A faint blush of indignation tinged the cheek of Sir Edward, and he finished his breakfast in silence.

This displeasure against his once darling Frederic was by no means lessened at receiving a letter from a sincere friend, a gentleman who was then at Cromer, and between whom and Sir Edward there had been a friendship existing from their days of infancy: this friend charged him, if possible, to withdraw his nephew immediately from a scene of iniquity and destruction; he informed the baronet, that he saw through all the despicable and unmanly artifice of Major Raymond, with the fascinations and dangerous principles of Lady Isabella; and that the morals and fortune of Mr. Harrington would be inevitably ruined by her baneful allurements.

Sir Edward, on the receipt of this afflicting intelligence, wrote to his nephew the most kindly expostulating letter, wherein he made use of every tender and affectionate persuasion to induce his return to a wife, who not only loved him with virtuous constancy, but who did honour to his choice: he urged the obligatory necessity of his breaking those ignominious fetters by which he was now so completely and infamously bound; expatiated on the dreadful crime of indulging the illicit passion with which he was inspired; but firmly promised, ere he concluded his letter, that not one reproachful sentence from him should reach his ear, if he would instantly return.

This letter afforded only laughter to him and the gay partner in his guilt; and, by her advice, he wrote an answer, saying, That he was of age to act, in every respect, as he pleased; that he was quite weary of the shackles and restraints which an uncle, who could have no right to act with any authority, had so long laid upon him; that he was determined henceforth to act and think for himself: he had done every thing in his power to render his wife and her father independent and happy; and he was sure the present society of his uncle had much added to their felicity, and must make his own presence more easily dispensed with: that uncle he should certainly welcome with the most sincere pleasure; and for that purpose he should come home as soon as it was conducive to his health, or any other reasons which might keep him where he was; but, that he never would be restricted; and he must beg to be considered as totally independent in future, and at liberty, in every respect, to act as he pleased.—By the same post, Mary received a cold and distant letter from her once kind and tender Frederic. Sir Edward watched the various emotions of her interesting countenance as she read it; and “Oh!” thought he, “thou shalt yet triumph!”

Once he had an idea of taking the worthy Curate and his daughter, and setting off to Cromer; “But alas!” thought he, “then perhaps, this new-made wife, almost yet a bride, may witness the distracting truth of her husband’s infidelity! now, in her retirement, we may succeed in keeping it from her: I will therefore occupy her thoughts, and prepare her for that splendid station I yet hope to see her fill—the happy and honoured wife of Frederic Harrington.”

Without loss of time, and at that highly purchased and profuse expence which his large fortune enabled him to bestow on her, he sent to London for the most eminent masters to attend upon Mary; he was resolved, that on her introduction into the great city next winter, she should outshine her criminal rival in the elegance of her carriage and manners, and also in those accomplishments to which he knew her divine voice and wonderfully quick capacity would impart a brilliancy.



He told not his niece the extent of her misfortune, but gently hinted to her that Frederic was a gay young man, too apt to be swayed by the contagion of modern manners: "Exert yourself, then, my sweet niece," he would say; "study indefatigably the shining accomplishments I wish you to possess: as you are superior in every virtue of the mind, so rise, even by trivial accomplishments, above the vain coquettes and gaudy flutterers of the present hour; the heart of your husband may stray, and be tempted to wander amongst them; but you *will*, you *shall* regain it!"

Mary started. "Fear nothing, my Mary," continued he; "I only tell you, the world you have just entered is beset with danger and temptation of every kind, particularly for our sex; the labyrinths of fashion are unknown to you; I fear not that *you* will lose yourself in them, but I am not without some portion of anxiety on my nephew's account: born and educated amongst fashion's votaries, he is become one of them, and loves the fickle goddess too well: to you, the wife of his bosom, the object of his fondest choice, belongs the glorious task of his reformation. You must perceive, my dear girl," added the worthy man, while a tear started to his benevolent eyes, "that the reign of romantic ardour, short as it has been, is at an end. When your husband returns, receive him with smiling tranquillity; beware equally of rapture as of reproaches; be yourself; be mistress of your feelings; shew that cheerful spirit which is worthy your virtue; a glorious conquest will be yours! shame, repentance, and true and lasting reformation his: and yet, suffer not, my sweet Mary, while you endeavour to deck your face with smiles, the worm of anguish to prey upon your susceptible heart; for I will venture to answer for Frederic, if you pursue the line of conduct I have chalked out for you; shew yourself generous and forbearing; and if vice and fashion do not quite *corrupt* his heart, you will be happier with him than if he had never erred; he will never again leave you, nor forsake you."

While this excellent man made use of this honest artifice to encourage the hopes and elevate the spirits of his niece, it was he who felt the "worm of anguish!" Pale, distressed, his fine form wasted to a shadowy appearance, the inward state of his mind can be better fancied than portrayed: he hoped much from Mary, but he dreaded the wavering principles of his nephew, to whom he now fancied his former partiality had been so great as to make him blind to his imperfections, which he, with all the self-tormenting pangs of anxiety, now magnified into a vicious disposition: but Frederic Harrington was not naturally wicked; he had excellent principles and a feeling heart, but he had been spoilt by the incense of flattery, and the too evident admiration of the softer sex; while the gay principles of the present fashionable world were such, as, while they pleased his senses, ensnared his heart, by fatally deluding his sanguine imagination and too easy temper.

Week after week flitted away, but no kind husband arrived to the expectant Mary, who attended to her fashionable accomplishments with diligent perseverance: the hope that Sir Edward held out to her she easily received; her disposition had ever been such as to look always on the fairest side of life's deluding prospects; and her unwearied occupations in the day, with her music, dancing, and singing masters, studying Italian with Sir Edward, who was a proficient in the language, and learning of him, in the evening, every fashionable game at cards, so employed her, that when she pressed her pillow an hour before midnight, her sleep was sweet, sound, and unbroken, and she awoke, each morning, more blooming, more lovely in person than ever.

In the mean time, her sister Margaret would have been completely weary of the splendid kind of vassalage in which she lived with Mrs. Davenport, were it not that visions of unalterable love occupied all her thoughts from the deceitful protestations dealt out to her by the libertine, Sir Charles Sefton: he had but lately become acquainted with the Davenports, and highly admired the bewitching Mrs. Davenport; but the greatest cause of his admiration of her, was, that she then chanced to be the fashion, and a most delightful notoriety was attached to him who could be happy enough to be her most favourite *cicisbco*.

Margaret Marsham, on his entering the drawing-room, the first evening after she became an inmate of Mr. Davenport's house, trembled and changed countenance, and was in a state of cruel anxiety, to think that *he* was the man whom Mrs. Davenport had professed to love very much, both to her waiting-maid and her confidential friend; for in Mrs. Davenport, Margaret imagined she had a most formidable rival to contend with, whose charms, though very bewitching, were yet much heightened in the eyes of Margaret by the warm principles of gratitude which glowed in her bosom.

Sir Charles fixed his eyes on the poor little Eglantine *grisette*; but he again took them off without addressing her; though he resolved from that moment to complete the ruin of her youthful innocence; for lovely as was Mrs. Davenport, he had never felt for her one spark of desire.

He was, indeed, as Mrs. Davenport had told her friend, grown much handsomer; and though he was fast approaching to that state which in so dissipated a being is generally hastened, and is far beyond *middle* age, yet there was a certain air, which so marked the gentleman, in spite of his defects, and so pleasing and insinuating a smile embellished his countenance, when he wished to appear amiable, that, together with his fine speeches and pretended regard, he had really made a conquest over the silly Margaret, whose desire to have a lover proceeded more from a vain and deluded imagination than from natural constitution.

Her former predilection for Sir Charles she now found return, with renewed ardour, on thus unexpectedly meeting him: the poisonous effects of romance-reading had not yet, notwithstanding the variety of life's usual scenes she had lately witnessed, been eradicated from her mind: and she now, without reflecting how much the members of the fashionable world unite, and are found together, thought it a most wonderful event that the first day of her arrival in London she should thus, so unlooked for, behold the object of her regard; and she felt certain that it was a sure presage of their being united: but, alas! he seemed to have forgotten her; and was the chosen favourite of a lady whom he appeared to regard with uncommon interest, and to attend her with the most pointed gallantry.

She caught a glance at herself in a long pier-glass; her thick figure appeared slimmer in mourning, her face was flushed from agitation, her bugles glittered from the reflection of numerous wax-lights, and she fondly imagined, that perhaps she was so much altered for the better, that Sir Charles did not immediately recognise her, and she was determined, if an opportunity offered, to address him first.

It had not yet occurred to her, that perhaps the violent anger of disappointed love, at her refusing to elope with him from the masquerade, was the cause of his pretending not to recollect her.

“Well, I am a careless creature!” said Mrs. Davenport, with a childish lisp and giggle; “I forgot, Sir Charles, to introduce my companion to you: Sir Charles Sefton, Miss Marsham, sister to Mrs. Harrington.” Sir Charles Sefton coldly bowed; while Margaret, with true *naïveté*, said, “Oh! ma’am, I have seen Sir Charles Sefton very often before.” “Where? child,” said Mrs. Davenport, with quickness, not unobservant of a deep sigh and a kind of reproachful love-glance which the baronet pointed directly to Margaret as she concluded her artless sentence; who immediately explained, saying she had seen him at the Leslies’, when that family were at Eglantine.

Love, particularly that illicit affection which goes by that name, is generally attended by a damsel in yellow attire, yclept Jealousy: Mrs. Davenport observed some stolen glances between the baronet and Margaret; she appeared, however, not to notice them, and turning to Sir Charles, said, “I have invited Mr. Leslie and Lady Caroline to a rout next week; you have no objection to meet your old acquaintance, I suppose: I have never heard you even mention them; but I intended to have sent you a card to-morrow.”

“None, in life,” said Sir Charles, colouring; “I do not visit there now, but we frequently meet.”

There was a constraint about Sir Charles, and a kind of mystery this evening, which did not well please Mrs. Davenport; and she was out of humour with him, with herself, and every one else. Sir Charles, with a desponding look, after numerous efforts to restore the lady to her usual sprightliness, uttered a pointed philippic against the cruel caprices of the fair; and darted a most reproachful look at Margaret, which she well understood, and was now convinced she had found out the cause of his former coldness towards her.

The arrival of some gay young men to supper, who were favourites of Mrs. Davenport, for that gross incense of flattery which they continually offered at the shrine of her beauty, gave Sir Charles an opportunity of speaking to Margaret apart. She was so desirous of being re-instated in his good opinion, and receive again from him looks of tenderness instead of anger, that she said to him, “La! Sir Charles, I see you are angry; but I am sure, when my sister was taken so ill, I could not act otherwise than I did on the night of Mr. Leslie’s masquerade, though I had consented to a clandestine marriage with you.” “*Marriage!*” repeated the baronet; “*marriage!* my adorable girl? I thought you had more liberality of sentiment than to think of that certain destroyer of true and lasting love: look now at the amiable Mrs. Davenport, who *married* for love; is *she* happy? look at Lady Isabella Raymond, who now detests her husband, and he her.” “Lady Isabella!” said Margaret; “ah! where is that dear friend of my heart? that congenial soul with my own!” “I do not know,” said the baronet; “we have never met since her marriage; I am told she is very unhappy; and point me out, if you can, one married pair that is otherwise.” “Yes, sir, my sister.”—“Is she?” continued Sir Charles with a sneer; “I much doubt it: Mr. Harrington is not the man to make one woman happy long; he was always a professed libertine, and had he really loved your sister, he would never have married her.” “Dear sir,” said Margaret, “what but love could make him marry my sister? she had no fortune, no accomplishments to entitle her to such a match.”—“Nonsense! child,” said Sir Charles, “why the man was under the dominion of a raging fever, quite delirious, I understand.” “No, indeed, sir,” said Margaret, “not when he was married.” “*Married!*” echoed Sir Charles, “how I do hate that odious word! Oh! my beloved, my angelic

Margaret, I love you with that refined ardour that assures me I shall love you for ever! and I could not bear the idea of being *obliged* to love you because a priest muttered over a few vows, which vows are poor indeed, to those my heart would make to the charms of your mind and person!

“How can I write to you, my dear girl? we are now observed.” He then turned to the company, but soon found a second opportunity, amidst the buz of fashion, to address the credulous girl, under pretence of enquiring after some friends in the country.

“Beware,” said he to her, “of Mrs. Davenport; she is of a very suspicious disposition; therefore, forgive me, if I am sometimes obliged apparently to take no notice of you; be assured, at those very moments of seeming neglect, my heart holds sweet communion with yours: tell me how I can write to you?”

“I fear that will be impossible,” said Margaret; for she had no friend, or *confidante* to whom she could repose so important a trust; and the licentious baronet and the romantic girl concluded therefore only to watch every opportunity which chance might offer of plighting to each other their mutual protestations of unalterable and unrestrained affection.

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## CHAP. XX.

## NEWS FROM EGLANTINE.

“The Great O’s and Macs!”

IRISH BALLAD.

—————The sons of *pleasure* flow  
Down the loose stream of false, enchanting joy,  
To swift destruction.—————

THOMPSON.

MRS. DAVENPORT, now tortured by all the pangs of jealousy, treated poor Margaret not only with neglect, but ill-nature: the unfortunate victim of Sir Charles Sefton’s arts bore it with *Job-like* patience, reflecting on the lot of all the beautiful and amiable heroines of romance, who were born to encounter difficulties, be the sport of fortune, and afflicted sufferers, from the caprice of tyrants and jealous friends converted into foes!

As she sat in her dressing-room one morning, contemplating on the happiness of being the *ever-cherished* and *lasting* favourite of the fashionable *sultan* who admired her, Mademoiselle Minette (for Margaret had no *peculiar* maid to wait on her, as was at first promised) came to her, and said, “that one very odd-looking, *petite boule* of a man wanted to speak with her; and *ah! mon dieu,*” continued the *soubrette*, “*qu’il est roux!*” So saying, she very politely spit on the carpet, and shrugged her shoulders: “*Mais, tenez, mademoiselle, de porter has shew him into de littell anti-room next to de salle à manger; dare you vill find him.*”

Mademoiselle then, who was completely equipped in a most elegant and voluptuous morning *costume*, hastily descended; and Margaret, with a fluttering heart, trembling lest Sir Charles had been imprudent enough to have hazarded the sending her a letter by some precarious hand, was some moments in that agitation, which prevented her from immediately descending; but summoning all her resolution, she judged how very imprudent it was in her to delay, and how much it behoved her to hasten and snatch from the herald of her admirer the love-breathing epistle before any questions might be asked, or perhaps the amorous effusions of her devoted knight be perused by another.

As she passed the door of Mrs. Davenport’s dressing-room, which stood open, she beheld, to her amazement, Mademoiselle Minette on the staircase, clasped in the arms of Mr. Davenport, who was giving her several fervent kisses, while she impudently threw her arms round his neck, saying, “*Dare, monsieur, dat is de last, madame is waiting for me.*”

“Shocked at what she had seen and heard, Margaret yet trembled for the repose of her benefactress, and gently approached her door in order to close it, and while in the good-natured act, Mrs. Davenport screamed out, “*Merciful heaven! who is shutting my room-door? I am almost dying with the unusual heat of the weather!*” then advancing

forward, she added, with the most quiet *sang-froid*,\* “Come, Davenport, when you can spare Minette, do send her to me; I am going to Ackermann’s this morning to choose some dressing-boxes and a few ornaments, and I want her attendance.”

“Upon my word, Emily,” replied he, “I never saw Minette look so pretty in my life.” He then laughed, gave her another kiss; and the astonished Margaret could not avoid feeling disgust at this licentious accommodation of modern manners, which was carried to that unfeeling excess by Mr. and Mrs. Davenport, as had not only been unwitnessed by herself, but by every one else; and was unparalleled in all the annals of fashion.

A greater surprise, however, succeeded, and of a very different kind, when she beheld in the porter’s anti-room, wiping his face from profuse perspiration, Phelim O’Gurphy!

To see at this moment the son of one of the kings of Ireland filled her bosom with self-reproach and violent agitations; she felt that it was now utterly impossible for her ever again to have the least regard for him, for all her fondest affections centered in Sir Charles Sefton: no, Phelim could no longer make any impression on her heart, even if he had then laid a crown and sceptre at her feet. She fervently wished for his immediate departure, and broke silence by speedily asking after the health of her father and sister.

“*Och*, and they are all well,” said Phelim, “and there’s my young mistress Harrington, to be sure, and hasn’t she a deal of business now? She has masters out of number—just as many as three of them, for music, singing, and dancing: and then there’s Sir Edward Harrington teaching her to *spake* a new kind of language.” “What, is it German?” said Margaret; “*Och!* miss, mayhap it may be, I don’t know; only I am sure it is not Irish, for *och gramachree*, it is not *half* so sweet by a *third part*.”

“But have you no letters for me?” asked Margaret. “*Och!* and by the powers but I have, miss: be so good as to read that direction, miss, whether that letter is for you or the lady of the house?”

Margaret was astonished that this scion of royalty knew not how to read; but imagining it was only pretension, from fear of a discovery, and that he was over-acting his part, she said, “Oh! Phelim, why this disguise? it is all in vain——”

“*Och!* by the holy St. Patrick, miss, and there is no disguise at all, at all: why, I saw my master direct the letter himself, with his own hand and pen.”

One of the letters was directed to Mrs. Davenport; and Margaret immediately hastened with it, upstairs, to that lady’s dressing-room, and then retired to peruse her own.

She found therein, that in about a fortnight her father purposed visiting town, with letters of recommendation from Sir Edward Harrington to the Chancellor, requesting his favour and patronage to a most worthy divine, and that he would bestow on him one of those valuable livings which were in his immediate gift. She perceived a kind of depression of spirits ran through every line of this letter, and that he appeared by no means elevated with the fair prospects which awaited him. He wrote her word also that her uncle Charles had been amongst the sick at Flushing, but was speedily recovering, and expected shortly to arrive in England. She shed a few bitter tears; she dreaded the arrival of this uncle; she had acted that culpable part which she knew, if discovered, he

would never forgive; for oh! the silly and romantic Margaret Marsham had suffered herself to be dishonoured by a treacherous and abandoned libertine!

Though her betrayer had triumphed over her innocence and credulity, yet she was not an adept in art; vice was a stranger to her, and she was never likely, with all her failings, to become depraved: though her eyes were not yet open to the absurdity of the opinions she had imbibed from her dangerous readings, yet, after this, her fatal error, her sentiments became more refined, her way of thinking more just, and even her heart might be said to be better. Sir Charles had triumphed over all her scruples, had taught her to consider her connection with him as *virtuous*: as yet she had perceived no change in his affections; and Sir Charles had really wondered at himself that she pleased him so long; but there was a novelty in the amour; their interviews were short and stolen, and a kind of mystery attached to the intrigue which rendered it out of the common way, and gave a zest and a variety to his amorous pursuits.

He told her how requisite it was, at present, from the eyes of a prying world (which he rejoiced to find was daily getting more liberal and enlightened), to conceal their present state of happiness, and confine it to their own bosoms: the consciousness of her deceitful conduct, an innate sense of the principles of female honour, which she knew she had violated, now made her heart sink with shame, and the big tear of unavailing repentance and regret dropped from her eye.

Mrs. Davenport's bell rang, and roused her to rally and recover her spirits; Margaret was summoned into her presence. "I have here a letter from your father, Margaritta," said she; "in a fortnight I expect he will be in town." "So he writes *me* word, madam," said Margaret. "Well, my dear," said Mrs. Davenport, with her accustomed good-nature, "will you have the goodness to answer this letter for me; make every apology on my part, but tell him I am obliged to go out, or I would certainly have done myself the honour of answering it myself; but be sure you tell him that I entreat, as does Mr. Davenport also, that he will make our house his home during his stay in town: and while you write your letter, pray see that the young man who brought these has whatever refreshment he may wish, and that the larder and cellar can afford: I love your father, Margaritta, and oh! how dearly, in my girlish days, did I love your dear mother!" Here a sigh of regret stole also from the bosom of Mrs. Davenport at the recollection of *her* days of innocence, for which fashion, that approximate goddess of vice, had made her so little amends by the change; but hurrying reflection from her mind, as a painful intruder, she dashed off, in all the morning elegance of modern taste, in her new carriage to the Repository of Arts and Fashion.

A momentary gleam of comfort, when she saw her depart with smiles beaming upon her, quieted the mind and conscience of Margaret, and she hastened to write her letter to her father; but as she again descended to desire Phelim to avail himself of Mrs. Davenport's kind hospitality, she beheld the *royal* Phelim and a stout Hibernian, who was one of the supporters of Mrs. Davenport's sedan, in a firm embrace; both crying, or almost howling, and speaking together in a language she could not understand; but she was sure it was neither *Italian* nor *German*, though no doubt much *sweeter* to the ears of the present speakers, being the ancient language of dear little Ireland!

This brawny son of Erin, whom Phelim now embraced, was coarseness and vulgarity personified; and the very sight of him had often disgusted the romantic fair-one, who now looked with wonder on the scene before her.

But now she was soon convinced of all the native low breeding of Phelim, and that he was no *royal* or *noble* lover in disguise; for turning to her, he exclaimed, while a broad grin embellished the countenance of his companion, as he wiped away the tears with his sleeve, “*Och!* Miss Margaret, and I am sure now, you are so kind-hearted, that you will be glad to hear that, who should this be but my own cousin, who I thought had been drowned in the Dublin packet, as he came over to hay-making, when he arrived here about two summers ago: *och!* and you did not do well not to let me know whether you was dead or alive! Well, what a blessed day is this! for just stop a little, now, miss, and be after listening to me a bit: a young girl named Jenny O’Dunnahough, sells milk here to my lady’s house, and do you know that she promised to marry me when I first saw her at the time I went with my poor mother to Dublin: *och!* what a little bit of a thing was Jenny then! I think I see her padding barefoot after her mother, along Fish-amble-street; *och!* Paddy Gallacher, did not her mother sell the best *Dublin bays*\* in the whole city?” “By J——s and she did,” replied the chairman; “but make yourself *aisy*, honey, and I’ll warrant you Jenny will be glad enough to keep her word; she did not come here with the soldiers for nothing; one of the guards got her to milk the cows in the park; and now she makes a pretty penny, let me tell you, by selling milk about, and puts as much water in it as any girl in London.”

Phelim did not much like the remembrance of Jenny O’Dunnahough having followed the soldiers from Dublin, and was glad to wave the subject, by accepting the repeated offer of Margaret to refresh himself; and repairing to Mr. Davenport’s plentiful kitchen, made himself ample amends for the fatigues of his journey.

Poor Margaret found great relief in the task Mrs. Davenport had set her, of answering her father’s letter which he had addressed to that lady; she would otherwise have been much at a loss for expressions to lengthen her own. The sun of innocence had set never to rise again; and her now overstrained terms of filial affection, though regarded by her parent as proceeding from that romantic enthusiasm she had ever evinced, were yet very different from those which formerly filled her letters: for heaven, when it formed the hearts of the Marshams, filled them with the fondest natural affections for the ties of blood and kindred, which nothing could eradicate, nor indeed obscure.

But Margaret knew, in spite of all Sir Charles Sefton’s sophistry, that she had acted wrong; she rejoiced when she saw Phelim, half intoxicated, depart with the letters; and hastening to her dressing-room, she indulged her sorrow and inward anguish in a copious flood of tears. Sir Charles Sefton, however, soon restored comfort to her mind, who finding out by his spies that Mr. and Mrs. Davenport were from home, was ushered, for a golden bribe, by the convenient Minette into the apartment of Miss Marsham.

Sir Charles certainly felt some degree of tenderness for one who, though nature had been led astray by the delusions of imagination, was yet a child of nature; artifice and deceit were by no means the native inhabitants of her breast, *they* were as *foreign* to her heart as it was repellant to them.

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\* A name given by the common people in Ireland to the herrings caught in Dublin-bay.



He did not now perceive her red and swoln eyes without an emotion of pity and concern; and from his kind soothings and ardent protestations of unchanging affection, he soon restored her to that state of happiness which she thought it impossible ever again to feel, after the mental anguish she had experienced in the morning. "Oh!" thought she, "he often told me, and he told me true, that his love for me would increase each day by possession: I am the happiest of my sex! and, ah! how delightful is a connexion like ours, how superior to the cold restraints of formal marriage!"

Sir Charles had stayed with Margaret till he heard the clock strike five; he was yet in his morning dress; and the hair of Margaret was still *en papillotes*. The Leslies were expected in the evening, and the family were to dine at half past five; Margaret had not seen them at Mrs. Davenport's rout, being confined to her room by a cold, and she reckoned much on seeing Lady Caroline that evening, when she hoped to hear something of Lady Isabella, her sister, whom she had ever loved, and to whose principles she had too fondly listened and adhered;—yet though it took her more than half an hour always to adorn herself, for it was now but very seldom that she could get any one to assist her, yet she could not forbear intreating the baronet to stay a little longer: but soon the thundering peal at the knocker of Mrs. Davenport's door convinced the lovers it was time to separate; and put Sir Charles at his wit's end to frame an excuse for being caught there in his morning *dishabille* at so late an hour: he, however, endeavoured to dart to the drawing-room, but not time enough to prevent his meeting Mrs. Davenport, as he descended the last stair which led from Miss Marsham's apartment.

"Pray, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Davenport, while her face flushed with passion, "what am I to understand by this? Have you an intrigue with my chambermaid, or any one else, upstairs? for as to Miss Marsham, you have often told me she was too ugly for any man to think about her, so I suppose it is not that lady you have just been visiting."

Sir Charles stood before the lady, whom he had often declared the sole divinity to whom he paid adoration, in deep confusion: the edge of his beaver was applied to his lips, and helped to shade a part of his face, the natural yellow tinge of which was suffused by a kind of orange-coloured red, which imparted that shame to the speaking eyes he possessed from nature, that Mrs. Davenport was now convinced, as she, with the quickness of thought and recollection, revolved over with rapidity several concurring circumstances, which served to prove to her that Sir Charles had a nymph in her house which was much dearer to him than herself, whom he had frequently styled his matchless Calypso. She, therefore, rang the bell with violence, and ordered a servant to let Miss Marsham be informed that she wanted her instantly in the drawing-room, and that she must descend, dressed or undressed.

"I must beg then to take my leave," said the wily baronet, "as the lady may perchance be the latter; oh! thou medicean goddess, if it was thee in such a guise, I would stay with all the temerity love inspires, though all the artillery of earth and heaven were pointed against me."

"Hold! hold! Sir Charles," said Mrs. Davenport, with a scornful sneer, "explain this morning visit to my satisfaction, and then——" "Why," interrupted Sir Charles, "I called to ask Davenport how he did; the girl was in the parlour, and——" "What girl?" said Mrs. Davenport. "Why—why, Miss Marsham," stammered out the baronet; "and she teased me to go and look at her tasteful dressing-room, as I had once promised her: it was

late, to be sure, when I came—but I do not think I have spoken five words to her; I was reading the Morning Post almost all the time. What do you think of the brutes\* at Covent-Garden Theatre opposing Jack Kemble and the divine Catalani?”

“That is nothing to the purpose, Sir Charles,” said Mrs. Davenport; and immediately poor Margaret entered, with her hair just combed out, and a dressing-jacket on: she would fain have retreated at sight of Sir Charles, but Mrs. Davenport immediately stopped her, and said, “Why you were not in the parlour, I think, when Sir Charles came, were you?” “No, madam.” “Very well,” said Mrs. Davenport, darting an angry look at Sir Charles, between whom and Margaret she had so placed herself as to prevent any intelligent looks. “Go, Margaritta, and fetch me the Morning Post out of your room.” “Madam, if you recollect, you took it out with you on account of an advertisement about some laces that were to be sold.” “Oh! yes, here it is,” said Mrs. Davenport, taking it from her *ridicule*; “and now, sir, you may read about *the brutes at Covent-Garden*, while I and this young lady go to dress ourselves, as we dine to-day before six: Margaritta, take care of this gentleman, he has more art than you, my poor girl.”

Mrs. Davenport had no idea that the baronet and Margaret were carrying on their intrigue under her roof, or that she had been so long the object of his intended seduction; but yet she saw she had every reason, with all her superior beauty and peculiar loveliness, to be jealous of a girl whose person would never have been noticed in her presence, unless to make comparisons very much to the disadvantage of Margaret: yet Mrs. Davenport had penetration enough to see, and knowledge of the fashionable world enough to know that variety, in almost any form, is pleasing to the depraved libertine; and that the uncontaminated youth of Margaret, and the simplicity of her character might render her a formidable rival: she would not, however, even to her highly-favoured Minette, impart her ideas that such an object as Miss Marsham could inspire her with jealousy; but she was resolved to watch all her movements herself, and put some scheme in execution to get rid of such an inmate, whom she now heartily repented having taken under her protection.

About ten the Leslies arrived: Mr. Leslie thought Margaret much improved in her person, and expatiated upon the change in many fashionable compliments. Mr. Davenport just looked off his cards with that kind of expression in his countenance which seemed to say, Good Heavens! what *must* she have been then? while Lady Caroline, when at supper, happening to sit near her, and having been uncommonly in luck at the card-table, was in high good humour, and addressed her with, “Why, Miss Marsham, you really look *divinely*! I am sure, Theodore,” added she, turning towards her husband, “Miss Marsham’s late lover, Sir Charles Sefton, must now be completely captivated: I never saw such an alteration in my life for the better in any young person.”

The agitation of Mrs. Davenport, at discovering that Sir Charles had so long been an admirer of Margaret’s, almost caused that lady an hysteric fit, had she not flattered herself that she perceived in her Ladyship’s manner a great deal of the fashionable *hoax*.

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\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

\* *Historique.*

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“Pray, my Lady,” said Margaret, smiling (for she did not now dread to smile when she spoke, having had her broken teeth replaced by a skilful dentist, at the earnest entreaties of Sir Charles), “permit me to ask you if you have heard lately from your charming sister, Lady Isabella Raymond?” “Oh! we very seldom hear *from* her,” replied her ladyship, “but we often hear *of* her: Isabel had always an independent spirit; and wherever she goes, and whatever she does, she will always be a pattern of fashionable notoriety: your brother-in-law, Harrington, is now her favoured swain.” “Indeed!” said Margaret. “Aye,” said the rector, “Isabel must take care of herself; for if she is guilty of any indiscretion, all the world will be acquainted with it, from her known celebrity.” “I dare answer for my sister,” said Lady Caroline, “for I am sure she would never live with loss of reputation.”

“Why, no,” said Mr. Leslie, “she holds it as a constant maxim, that our life is always at our own disposal; and Isabella does not damp the joy of the present hour by any idle notions concerning futurity; which, by the bye, we none of us know any thing about. Come, Davenport, pledge me in a bumper of Madeira, to the delights of our *present* existence.” “*Encore! Bravo!*” said Davenport, tossing off two bumpers, one after the other. Lady Caroline laughed, and joined in the gay unthinking toast, saying, “Come, ladies, follow my example.” Mrs. Davenport *forced* a smile; for even Mrs. Davenport, with all her fashionable folly, with all the coldness of her moral character, knew how dearly to estimate the principles of the pious curate, Marsham, before those of his dissipated rector.

“I know,” said Lady Caroline, with an arch look, “Miss Marsham will not drink this toast, for she looks forward to the happy *future* moments, not of *heavenly* bliss, but the *earthly* joy of being Lady Sefton!” Oh! no, indeed,” said Margaret, again smiling; for though she would have liked the *title*, Sir Charles had succeeded in making her *dislike* the *married* state; and reflecting on her brother-in-law being now the declared admirer of another lady than his wife, and contrasting with such a wedded state her own present happiness, she cheerfully joined in the toast.

“Well, I never did see any one so wonderfully improved,” said Lady Caroline, looking *quizzically* at Margaret’s mouth; but Mrs. Davenport, who had also many of her toilette-mysteries, which she wished to conceal, said, “Dear Lady Caroline, I see nothing extraordinary, that so *very* young a girl as Miss Marsham should improve in her outward appearance; think of the advantages she derives from seeing nothing but fashionable life; and the care that is taken of her person, which is never thought of in the country.”

Lady Caroline, who owed very little of *her* beauty to the auxiliaries of art, replied, as she glanced her meaning eyes at the fine red and white of Mrs. Davenport’s complexion; “Undoubtedly you are in the right; numerous are the aids in London to set off the person; which, though they may have found their way into the country amongst a few who are past the bloom of life, are scarcely ever practised there by *young* ladies, till the town air, and *continual dissipation*, render it *indispensable!*”

The wit of the ladies began now to border on satiric invective: the gentlemen had taken wine *sufficient* to be captious, but not *enough* to be pleased with *any thing* and *every thing*. Lady Caroline’s servants, and those of other gay visitants, were called;— amongst this *partie en famille*, were Mrs. Benworth and her daughter; the latter, who had not spoken three words the whole evening, made herself amends for her silence as she

went home, expatiating on the false teeth of Miss Marsham, and how easily they might be known from those that were natural. The varnished face of Mrs. Davenport, and her pencilled eye-brows; with the pains she took to shew her *real* fine teeth, and the dimple in her cheek, which Mrs. Davenport was continually flattered about, and which she herself thought so bewitching, but which *she*, Miss Benworth, looked upon as a *vile defect*: Lady Caroline Leslie was certainly pretty, if she was not so pale; she wondered she did not use a little *rouge*, as it would certainly set off her eyes, which, though fine, looked rather languid and hollow. These and other similar remarks amused the mother and daughter in their short ride to Berkeley Square, from the morning hour of three (the time they left Mr. Davenport's house), till a few minutes after, when they arrived at their own mansion.

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## CHAP. XXI.

## A MANUSCRIPT.

\_\_\_\_\_Ye fair,  
 Be wisely cautious of your sliding hearts;  
 Dare not th' infectious sigh, the silent look,  
 Down-cast and low, in meek submission dress'd,  
 But full of guile: let not the fervent tongue,  
 Prompt to deceive, with adulation smooth,  
 Gain on your purpos'd will: nor in the bow'r,  
 Where woodbines flaunt and roses spread a couch,  
 When evening draws her crimson'd curtains round,  
 Trust your soft minutes with betraying man.  
 THOMSON.

THE study of politics affording so little comfort to the mind of Mr. Marsham; and being no ways interested in the opposition of the public against the raised prices at the new theatre of Covent-Garden, with which accounts the papers were filled, although he certainly rejoiced at the systematic loyalty of the populace, as much as he detested the factious mob which succeeded after the sitting of the committee: he left his daughter one morning wholly occupied with her worthy uncle, who was attending to the progress of her improvements, and repaired to the library: he there, turning over some of the books, without settling to the study of any one in particular, found a collection of valuable notes in manuscript, by the late Miss Seward, which Mr. Harrington had purchased at a great price at the sale of that celebrated lady's effects after her decease: the hand-writing was somewhat similar, and brought to his recollection that of the packet his nephew had given him the last time he called at the farm; for Mr. Matthew Marsham had taken a journey into Suffolk soon after, and had not yet returned.

Edward had laid the paper in his bureau, and had forgotten it till the present moment; he therefore closed the volume in his hand, and retiring to his chamber, he opened the packet and read as follows:

*“To my beloved child Matthew Mar-  
 sham, to be perused by him when he  
 shall have attained his four-and-twen-  
 tieth year.*

“As the hand of sickness is now extended over my shattered frame, and unavailing and bitter regret for past errors lacerates my bleeding heart, and threatens my prime of life, with rapid and premature decay, I look forward in imagination to those years which you, an healthy promising child, will doubtless, with the blessing and protection of the Almighty, attain unto. When you open this paper, my beloved son, you will have attained your twenty-fourth year; and when you arrive at that period, your unfortunate mother will

have long descended to the “narrow house” appointed to us all. But that period was to me the happiest I knew, since the fault that plunged me into sorrow, my family into disgrace, yet made me the happy mother of a child, who, though so very young in years, seems rich in sense and every moral virtue.

“At this area of my life, after seven years unremitting and implacable anger from my sole surviving parent—a father! I received, with a summons to my long-forbidden home, his last blessing and forgiveness; till then, after my fatal crime, committed at the inexperienced and thoughtless age of seventeen, his doors had been shut against me, and all the ardent pleadings of a tried and valued friend were in vain. Oh! my son, had it not been for that friend, thy mother would have never lived to have brought thee forth! Sacred, pure, and heaven-descended affection, female friendship! why art thou so *seldom* found? Yet this celestial plant, though scarce, always, when of genuine growth, flourishes fairest amidst the chilling storms of adversity; then bright it blooms, and twines its finest tendrils with healing succour around the suffering and bursting heart!

“Such to me, when expelled a parent’s roof, and compelled to buffet against all the horrors of indigence (for I had solemnly vowed never to behold your father more), was Ellen Bradbury. How often has her fine form knelt before my unrelenting father, how often has she clung to him, kissed his feet and bedewed them with her tears; and been as often spurned from him! Oh! my son, the retrospect of these sorrowful moments, when the generous Ellen would share with me her last guinea, are too painful to my recollection—I am becoming incoherent—I must endeavour to preserve some method in this, the last epistle I shall most probably write to you; which will inform you of some events you are yet ignorant of; and which, as a fond mother’s bequest and dying intreaty, will be of infinite importance to you.

“When I was about the age of seventeen, I was complimented, in the village where I resided, for possessing much beauty; and my father being a wealthy farmer, and I his only child, it was rumoured that my fortune would be large: this *latter* consideration, more than the *former*, gained me many suitors in a county remarkable for its expence, and where fortune is always sought for, as an appendage to personal qualifications, however bountiful THEY may have been bestowed on the owner. At this time, a gentleman arrived from London, who had recently lost his father; and a valuable farm being attached to his patrimony, he came down to *my* father, through the recommendation of a friend, to receive from him some instructions in the farming business, of which he was totally ignorant.

“There was nothing ever so repugnant to my frank disposition as any kind of artifice; and there was a blunt honesty about this young man, united with the character of the true gentleman, which highly pleased me: never did I behold so much candour in a human countenance before; and indeed his whole person might then be said to be very handsome.

“The man of education, the innate well-born gentleman, as much surpasses the rich country farmer which we farmers’ daughters are in the habit of seeing, as a finished courtier about St. James’s does an inhabitant of Smithfield or Whitechapel: I, who had received a boarding-school education in Queen-Square, and passed the vacations with a rich relation in London, could but too easily, with many a degree of comparison, see the difference between Mr. Marsham, my father’s pupil, and the young men who in general

visited at our house. "Our souls soon looked out" from "their windows, the eyes," and greeted each other:—alas! too soon, for my peace of mind, they found they were congenial. Oh! let me not dwell on these scenes, which, though then delightful to my thoughtless mind, now fill my bosom with shame and remorse! Suffice it to say, one fatal evening, lost in the enthusiasm of love, your mother, with her honour, forfeited for ever all her self-esteem.

"Marsham had the highest ideas of female delicacy and chastity; I too plainly saw, that though he had not ceased to love me with ardent fondness, yet he no longer respected me—how should he? I despised myself.

"He prepared to depart; and I really think he could not support the idea of calling that woman his wife, who had not possessed sufficient command over herself to repel his persuasions: he appeared to labour to express himself; a weight seemed pressing on his heart, from which I, with a bosom torn by anguish, relieved him: "We have given way, Marsham," said I to him, "to the indulgence of our mutual passion, and I well know that I am despicable in your eyes; so hateful am I in my own, that I should now blush to hail you by the title of husband—we part, never to meet again!"—"No, no, my beloved girl!" said he, tenderly embracing me; "I know it is true that your father has higher views for you, for he has made me his confident; but I am willing instantly to carry you off and marry you privately, if you will risk the possibility of his forgiveness when the deed is done." There was a coldness in this constrained offer I could not bear, and I said, "No, Mr. Marsham, as I never will carry deceit to the arms of any other man, so my true affection for you shall never give indiscretion and female instability to yours—we part—for ever!—I am fixed—"—"Oh! as to that," said your father, and as I then fancied, with a kind of contempt, "what has passed between us, my dear Jane, need never be known; and the gentleman your father has chosen for you is very wealthy, young, and by no means disagreeable; I think the best you can do is to comply with his wishes, and let us endeavour to forget each other."—"Oh! man! man!—Ah! my son, retrieve the honour of thy sex! be not like thy father in that one instance; and while thou art cautious of betraying, never desert the innocence that may chance to trust in thee!

"What became of your father at that moment I knew not, I saw no more of him; the severe agonies of my mind caused me a fainting fit; and on my recovery, I found myself lying on my bed, and the village apothecary, the very sight of whom I detested, standing by me: this man was a vulgar, gossiping being, who went tattling from house to house, and made himself welcome at many, by retailing all the scandal he could pick up.

"It seems I had fainted in the parlour, and that Mr. Marsham had ran out, alarmed, to call assistance; I was laid on my bed, restored by volatiles, and, as I kept my room the next day, I saw your father no more, who departed in the evening. In a few weeks I became extremely ill, and though I knew but too well the nature of my complaint, and made myself appear as well as I could, yet my father would insist upon sending for this hateful apothecary; poor Ellen, whom on the discovery of my pregnancy I had made my confidante, was then in the room alone with me. "Ha! ha! Miss Matthews," said he, with a malicious grin, as he felt my pulse, "why Miss—merciful heaven! why you are with—" "Oh! sir," said the almost fainting Ellen, interrupting him before he had finished his sentence, "indeed, sir, you are wrong,"—"Wrong, in what? Miss Bradbury," said he, "why you would not let me finish what I had to declare; but in plain terms, we will leave

out the *with*, your friend, Miss Mathews, is about four months advanced in a state of pregnancy! she best knows by whom.” “And here,” said I, frantically, as I fell on my knees, “I solemnly vow, in the face of heaven, no one but the father shall ever know by whom.” I then whispered Ellen to take the same rash oath; then, with equal agitation, I turned to the doctor, saying, “Oh! sir, spare my reputation; save, oh! save me from the wrath of a parent;” and taking my purse, containing ten guineas and some loose silver, I put it into his ready-opening hand, and said, “Oh! dear sir, accept this trifle from a grateful heart, and I will do much more for you, you shall not find me ungrateful.”—“Oh! no,” said Ellen, “spare but my friend, be secret, and here, dear doctor.” She then gave him her little stock, consisting of about three guineas; and as he took the money, he said, “Do you think I would not perform a good-natured action without fee or reward? however, I will accept these proofs of your generosity, and be only your banker; you may want this, if your father is unrelenting.”

“Surely, thought I, I have been mistaken in this man; he promises to be my friend, should my transgression reach the ears of my parent. I kissed his hands, I blessed the wretch who was meditating my instant ruin; for the first thing he did, after he had quitted me, was to hasten to my father and inform him of the situation I was in; who no sooner heard it, than, without mercy, without listening for one instant to my cries and intreaties, turned me immediately out of doors, without money, or any other clothes than those I at that wretched minute wore.

“The Misses Bradbury were without father or mother; but Ellen was under the charge of a sister near eighteen years older than herself: she was still a very beautiful woman, and possessed much liberality of mind and sentiment; but, to guard her pretty young sister, she affected more rigidity of manners than were natural to her real disposition, which I have been since told was always uncommonly gay and lively; but she was, at that time, yet of an age not to escape censure, with her very fine person, had she not been uncommonly prudent and rather reserved.

“Ellen was afraid to say much to her on my account, as she happened then not to be greatly in her sister’s good graces, having formed an attachment which Miss Bradbury thought very imprudent in a girl who had very little fortune of her own.

“This predilection of Ellen’s was very strong towards a young clergyman of the name of Ringwood; who had nothing but a small curacy for his support: the ardent love however that he felt for the lovely Ellen, obscured his reason; and, without reflecting on the indigence to which he might reduce the object of his affections, he was continually urging her to a private marriage: to this Ellen would by no means consent, fearful of giving offence to her amiable sister, whom she tenderly loved.

“This sweet pattern of friendship, my dear Ellen, whose small fortune was in the hands of her sister till she should come of age (and Miss Bradbury had been left a very handsome independency by her god-mother), affected to stand in want of some trifles for the approaching winter, and borrowed five guineas of her guardian sister; these she presented me; and I took an humble lodging, anxiously awaiting the time of my delivery, while she continually essayed, but all in vain, to melt the obdurate heart of my father in my favour. My generous friend suffered me not to want the common *necessaries* of life; but this was all she could do for me; alas! I had been used to its *luxuries*.



“In the mean time I found it impossible to subsist, and pay my rent with the little succour my poor friend could afford me; and my inhuman landlady, observing the state of my finances, told me her character was dear to her, and she could have no young lady’s bastards brought forth, indeed, in *her* house! while various conjectures sprang up in the village about the father of my child, whom I was resolved to conceal, and that from the tenderest concern for his safety: not that my father was a violent man, or one likely to resort to sword or pistol, as means of vengeance: he was also very infirm; but he might have recourse to *law*: he might even compel my *seducer*, as he would call him, to marry me: horrid thought! that Marsham, whose love of me and my refined way of thinking, wishing to be only free and spontaneous, and that his mind and heart should be mine, and mine alone, should be *compelled* to do me justice, by marrying me! I should have been even sorry that my forlorn and abandoned state had caused him, from kind *compassion*, to have become my husband; for,

“Could it bring me peace, or heal my shame,  
“That *pity* gave, what *love* refus’d to share?”

“However, this vow of Ellen’s and mine caused Miss Bradbury to set her face against me; for it was confidently reported that the father of my child was one of the lowest labourers about my father’s farm; he was uncommonly handsome for such a sort of man, but he was vulgarity itself: I had often remarked to several people how handsome he was, and particularly to Miss Bradbury: and one night, as we were unseen spectators of an harvest supper amongst the labourers, this unfortunate man was called upon to drink the health of the *prettiest* girl in the village that *he* knew: he immediately swore a great oath, that there was not such a pretty girl in the whole world as his young mistress, and added, with all the coarseness natural to such a being, “Ecod! I know she’s as dainty a lass as ever a man would wish to kiss.” The apothecary and his wife, with Miss Bradbury, stood next me, where we were peeping at the jovial crew. “There’s a conquest, Miss Matthews,” said they; and I, like a silly girl, blushed and motioned immediately to withdraw; but it was more from the enraptured and love-darting eyes of your father, who stood on the other side of me, than from the admiration of the clown.

“The apothecary, however, during my pregnancy, threw out his inuendos that there was little doubt about the father; especially, by my determining to conceal him. “No doubt,” Miss Bradbury said, “but I was ashamed of such a vulgar amour; she did not think my taste could have been so grovelling; and though she was very willing to grant every indulgence and forgiveness to those who went astray, yet she could not endure a woman, who had shewn herself so sensual, and made the first advances; which must have been the case indeed in the present instance.” My father soon took care to get the poor fellow pressed and sent to sea; without daring to risk the knowledge of so fatal a truth, by asking the unhappy wretch any questions.

“How much ought my sex to take warning from an error like mine! they may assure themselves that the calumny which attacks an imprudent female increases her fault to tenfold its imagined enormity, by the malevolence of that sting which her own guilty conduct has provoked and barbed against her.

“Poor Ellen, as a last resource, flew to the apothecary. “You said,” urged she, sobbing, “you said you would only consider yourself as *our banker*, or rather, as the banker of Miss Matthews;—the ten guineas, or half of them, will now be of infinite service to her,—she perishes!—her time draws nigh, and what will become of her? I have had so much money of my sister lately, that she reproves me for my extravagance, and I dare not ask her for more.”

“Me her *banker*?” said the cruel wretch, “to such a shameless, abandoned, young woman, who has seduced a poor ignorant fellow, and has now been the cause of banishing him from his country.”—“Oh! indeed,” said my faithful Ellen, “he is not the father of that child which my dearest friend expects every day to usher into this world of sorrow and misery. Do not deny her a part of what she so generously gave you.”—“I’ll tell you what, Miss Ellen,” said he, “if you are sure that Tom Smith is not the father of that child, you surely know who is; and as perhaps the discovery might do something in reconciling her father to her, tell me who it is, or go out of my house this instant.” “Sir,” said she, “I will obey you, and leave you to the bitter reproaches of your own sordid mind: I do not know who is the father; but I know my friend so well, that I am convinced she never would submit to the embraces of a low, untaught and vulgar man, one from the very dregs of society.” He gave an impudent laugh in her face, and made use of terms that would only sully my pen to transcribe. She returned to me, with a countenance on which sat despair, without the smallest illumination of hope. “My dear Jane,” said she, “suffer me to tell your father this dreadful secret.”—“Oh! never,” replied I, “both my vow and yours are registered in heaven; never, never must we break it. No, Marsham, no; thou hast abandoned me to want, shame, and infamy; of all this thou art ignorant; and never will I endanger thee, or impair thy moderate fortune.” “Suffer me,” said the charming girl, “to write to *him*, and inform him of your situation.” I told her, that if she attempted such a thing, she must forfeit my friendship and esteem for ever: at the same time, I assured her, that when the time arrived that I could with certainty inform him he was the father of a *living* child, I would write to him myself and let him know the event.

“What now shocked me most of all was, that the character of my Ellen began to suffer, from her known and constant attachment to my worthless self: even her Ringwood began to treat her with some degree of coldness, and requested her one day to break off her connection with me; she answered him to the following purpose.

“My dear Ringwood, you have frequently asked me to wed you privately; I have as often protested against it; you have told me that you had friends in the commons, willing and able to grant you a special licence whenever you applied: should I take this rash step, my amiable sister, much more frank-hearted and good-humoured than she outwardly appears, would forgive me, notwithstanding the invalidity of our marriage, from my being not quite of age. Now, Ringwood, I have often refused to grant you your strenuously urged request; I now, perhaps undergoing the mortification of being refused, offer myself to you.”

“The enraptured lover knew not how to express his grateful thanks and acquiescence: “But hold,” said Ellen, “it is on one condition alone I am yours. My unfortunate friend, Miss Matthews, must become a part of our family; she must share, equally with us, our scanty fortunes, and find an asylum under the roof of our humble cottage, for herself and her babe.” Ringwood appeared embarrassed: “You hesitate,”

added she; "if you refuse, I never will be yours."—"Retract that heart-rendering sentence, my adored Ellen," said he, "I will ever be the friend of *your* friend; and under our roof she shall find protection, and every comfort in my power to bestow." This generous scheme, however, I never would consent to, as it might perhaps injure the young man in his ecclesiastical promotion; but I acted a deceptive part, and affected to accede to his liberal offers. During the delays always attendant on these stolen weddings, you, my beloved son, made your appearance, in a wretched hovel, where a woman who had formerly worked on our farm, permitted me to lye in: it was there, my child, you first drew your vital existence.

"Had you been of my own sex, it is most probable I should never have given your father any intimation of your birth; but I wished my son to be educated as a gentleman, and to feel the protection of a father. I informed him therefore, that though I wished to have no farther claim upon him myself, yet now a dearer claim called upon him and his parental feelings. I forbore to say any thing of my indigent state; only told him, as my father would never see the child or *me*, whom he could not forgive, I requested him as a father, and as a man, to attend to his education, and let his boy be placed in some situation which might not be a discredit either to his parents or himself. He sent me a handsome remittance; requesting, as I was so young a mother, you might be put out to nurse: I complied with his request, and repaired to my dear friend, Mrs. Ringwood, who, with her worthy husband, often accompanied me in my frequent visits to you.

"At the age of five years old your father placed you at a boarding-school, not many miles from where I resided; whither he frequently went down to see you, and, as I was informed, absolutely doted on you. I was cautious of meeting with this destroyer of my peace, and frequently intreated of my beloved Mrs. Ringwood to feign that I was actually dead: she always replied, "Wait till your son may be sent farther from you; for I have been informed that Mr. Marsham, when he is arrived at a proper age, means to send him to a public school, or place him as an apprentice to an eminent surgeon, a genteel profession, and for which he himself had been destined by his late father."

"Ah! my son, when you had entered your eighth year, your father sent you to a respectable academy near London, and for some years I saw you no more! Eventful epocha of my life! your grandfather then lay on the bed of death; he sent for me, embraced me, and gave me entire forgiveness.

"On opening his will, I found myself the sole heiress to his immense wealth, with a fortune in the hands of an eminent banker amounting to twenty thousand pounds; but thus restricted, that by no means should I leave you one shilling of it, until you attained your twenty-fourth year: that day, that I obtained my parents' forgiveness, was my birthday: I just became that age; the lawyer sat by his bedside, penning the will; and he said to me, in a low voice, "Miss Matthews, it is well known, that illegitimate children have no right to any name but that of their mother: your father is not well pleased, that though you have had the modesty not to call your son by your own name, yet that you should think of giving him one of a long-valued friend: cannot you change it, and adopt some other?" My heart rose to my lips, I was about to break my vow, and tell them of your father; but then, joy at the assurance that my parent had no suspicion of my Marsham; terror, lest violent anger on the discovery might not only injure him on his bed of death, but also him I could never cease to love, and his still more dearly beloved offspring, made me check myself;

and as your father had desired you might bear his name, I said, "Sir, the name pleased me: old Mr. Marsham was my godfather; I esteem the character of his family though unknown to me, and I do them no injury by adopting a name which is common in England; nor can I think of changing it, as my son has been known by it for seven years." He said no more, but continued his writing.

"In this will, I found I was strictly forbade to marry your father, whoever he might be: this filled my eyes with tears of anguish and indignation, because it convinced me that my father had died in full belief that you was the child of Thomas Smith. Beware, my son, oh! beware of making rash vows; they argue a temerity in us wretched children of the dust, which mars the plan of our creation; poor, helpless, dependent beings in that great scale; unable of ourselves, to say what shall be the event of the next moment.

"Without hesitation, I gave the house, the farm, and all its lands, to my dear respected friends, the Ringwoods; with liberty, at their deaths, to bequeathe them to whomsoever they might please to make their heirs. I only requested in return, that Ellen would write to your father, that I was no more; and you was told the same, until I should be able to entrust you with the secret.

"The health of my dear Mrs. Ringwood had been sadly declining since the birth of her little girl: she is four years younger than yourself; from an infant, she promised to be a pattern of female loveliness, and was the perfect resemblance of her angelic mother.

"I was informed your father bore the news of my death not without being tenderly affected for me, but with that resignation and philosophy which shewed his love towards me had never equalled mine for him: no, it was rather the fugitive impression made on a man possessing all the ardour of youth, by a young creature in her first bloom, and whose person had the universal reputation of being beautiful.

"But how delightfully was I compensated, in hearing the deep affliction which my supposed death gave to your yet infantine mind!

"At the time you was about nine years old, I lost my inestimable Ellen; and her husband, whose love for her increased, as each day passed over their heads, expired in less than a twelvemonth after, leaving their only daughter solely dependent on Miss Bradbury, to whom they bequeathed all that I had given them. Miss Bradbury adopted the Mrs. to her maiden name, and with her niece removed into Essex. I had at this time retired into Devonshire, where I passed, under a feigned name, for a widow; and no one but my banker, in whose hands I placed my fortune, knew that Jane Matthews was yet living: you recollect this worthy man accompanying me, when with sweet filial fondness you witnessed, with overflowing joy, my resuscitation; you was then an apprentice, at the age of fourteen.

"Finding my health gradually decaying, and the approach of death sensibly near, I made my will; I learned, with much satisfaction, your father's intention of providing for you by a genteel profession, knowing well that I could leave you independent of it.

"As you will, no doubt, receive also some other advantages from a father, who evinces much affection for you, I have bequeathed, in my will, ten thousand pounds of the twenty yet in my banker's hands, to Lucy Ringwood, the daughter of the first among female friends, and a worthy divine, Ellen and Percival Ringwood; all this you will find explained and enlarged upon in my last will and testament, now in the hands of Mr. Molesworth, attorney at law, residing in the village of Freelingham, where you was born,

in the parish of St. John's, county of Suffolk. I am told that Lucy Ringwood promises to possess all that fascination so pleasing to your sex in ours, and which peculiarized her lovely mother. Let me warn you, my beloved Matthew, against the easy lapse of the heart, in the season of youth: reflect, that you never can espouse Lucy Ringwood, after my bequest to her, without an appearance of that sordid interest which would desire to obtain the *whole* of your mother's property: I look upon you both as my children; love her like a kind brother no more. I have equally divided my fortune between ye; but it must be *separately*, or it is no longer gratitude on my part towards her valued mother, who succoured me when I had not a shilling. Oh! no, if Lucy Ringwood and you were united in marriage, it would be only a desire for it to descend to my children's children. Beware! ah! beware of her attractions; shew yourself uninterested, in every respect, when you present her, from me, with an independent fortune.

"An humble green turf will cover the remains of your mother, on the *left hand*; and close to the stately monument she erected over your grandfather: kneeling on that rustic grave, there breathe a promise (and your mother's spirit will rest in peace,) that no admiration of Lucy Ringwood's person may tempt you to express a wish, that she should bestow herself (for with herself her fortune must be bestowed) on you. Yet, ah! take warning by your unhappy mother, and make no solemn vow! promise only to obey her to the utmost of your power: all vows are rash; for when made, they must be strictly kept; for oh! what sin can exceed that of perjury. "We know not what to-morrow may bring forth;" nor what is hidden in the secret abysses of time: from my religious observance of a solemn vow, I have suffered ignominy, shame and reproach! Blessed be the ALMIGHTY for the paternal instinct he implants in our bosoms; and that your father, in spite of all the calumny that assailed me, knew it was his own child which he clasped to his fond heart! The sweetest satisfaction I ever knew, since my days of sorrow, was in once hearing that your father declared, that "in many instances, he never knew a mind so great as mine; that I might *once* err; but that my soul was too naturally virtuous, ever to repeat my error." I hope he was not deceived in me; but oh! when he thought me thus excellent, why not joyfully pass his life in honourable marriage with such a woman?

"Yet this, his *last* expression concerning me which ever reached my ears, gives comfort to the last hours of my life, and I die most happy! Visit then the grave of your mother, and think of her last request! She releases you from the promise, but think, oh think! of her dying wishes; oh! my son, they centre all in thy happiness and honour. May thy fair tree of manhood be rich in those fruits of integrity, humanity and goodness, for which the blossoms of thy youth bid so fair! Beware of deception, beware the influence of the passions: *marry* the object of your fond choice, and lead a life of respected honour; but be ever cautious of carrying misery and regret into a family, by the indulgence of inclination, or the too easy yieldings of female youth and inexperience: be assured, in the circles of life in which I have moved, and in those which you will most probably fill, man is the first aggressor, and on that superior sex much depends the morality of every class of life.

"The hand that writes this will have perished in the silent grave long before you attain the period of discretion, marked out by my father, to put you in possession of your inheritance: lay the last words of your earthly parent to your heart, and be assured that by

practising virtue, and doing to every one as you would wish them to act towards you, you will ensure the favour of your HEAVENLY FATHER.

“Farewell,

“JANE MATTHEWS.”

(At the bottom was recently written, in Matthew Marsham’s own hand-writing; “*My dear Mother departed this life March 23d, in the third year of my apprenticeship.*”)

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## CHAP. XXII.

## PRIOR ATTACHMENT.

Eh! le voeu le plus libre et le plus volontaire,  
Devant Dieu qui prevoit tout, peut sembler téméraire.

LA HARPE.

—————Hence *venal* love!  
Love, that is slave to gold, is such a monster,  
So senseless quite, and so abominable,  
As the earth breeds not, or the ocean holds  
In his dark caverns.—————

AMINTA OF TASSO.

SCARCELY had Edward finished perusing the affecting tale of sorrow which had been penned during a last, lingering illness, by the once beautiful Miss Matthews, when a note was brought him from his nephew, informing him he was just arrived from Suffolk, and requesting to see him at the farm.

He had again resumed his deep mourning habit, which before had become more slight, since the months that had elapsed after his father's decease; and on his face sat a settled grief, which did not agree with that of the possessor of a handsome independent fortune: but how little happiness that capricious goddess can bestow, even when she pours her wealth in abundance into the lap of mortals, the lacerated mind and anguished heart, sighing under the garb of gorgeous pomp, can too well evince.

Edward was grieved to see this change in so young a man; and in one whose hilarity and correctly tempered, equal cheerfulness, and flow of spirits, added to all that amiability he, in every degree, so eminently possessed.

Unable to restrain the big tear from starting into his manly eyes, he grasped the hand of Mr. Marsham, and giving him a sealed parchment, he said, "This I found sealed, and inclosed in my mother's will, addressed to Mrs. Susanna Bradbury; be pleased yourself to deliver it into her hands, and also this letter to Miss Ringwood, whom I am resolved, let the sacrifice cost me whatever it may, never to behold again."

Edward, revolving over many circumstances in his mind, and seeing in an instant that, by some means hitherto unknown, an *attachment* between these young people had existed *prior* to the *mandate* of the dying Miss Matthews; with a pallid countenance and a tremulous voice, he said, "My dear Matthew, I hope you have bound yourself by no rash vow as you knelt on the grave of your mother?" "No," replied he, "that was *one* of her last requests; but ought not the other wish of such a mother to be as sacredly fulfilled as if I had taken the most solemn and binding oath? to me, her wish is as obligatory."

He then without farther comment informed his Uncle of his attachment to Miss Ringwood, and which we, for brevity's sake, will give the reader in simple narration.

When Matthew Marsham returned from the West Indies, he became a temporary resident in London, and at the house of a gentleman and lady, with whom he had been

very intimate, before he visited the Occidental Islands, he met with Lucy Ringwood, who was there on a visit for several weeks. He was desired to consider this house as his home during his stay in the metropolis; and thus two amiable young people became inmates under the same roof.

That wonder of literature, which Litchfield had the honour of producing, has asserted, and with much truth, that it is next to an impossibility for two people of a different sex, particularly if in the season of youth, to reside for any time together without experiencing for each other a tender sentiment. Can it then be wondered at, if two young people, so eminently gifted with the fascinating powers of pleasing as were Matthew Marsham and Lucy Ringwood, should form that fond attachment which was to mark the colour of their future lives? This, in many a solitary moment, in many a pleasurable excursion, became known to each other: mutual faith was plighted!—from Lucy, totally dependent on a rich aunt, to marry no one else than Matthew Marsham, or for ever wear the willow;—from him, a solemn promise and fixed resolution to ask her in marriage of that aunt, whenever a comfortable and easy independence should put it in his power to offer her, with his hand and heart, a fortune in some degree worthy of her. A private correspondence was agreed upon, and the virtuous and honourable principles of Matthew Marsham elevated him each hour in the esteem of his admired fair-one. Lucy, the very counterpart of her amiable mother, had a soul superior even to her personal attractions, which were captivating in the extreme; each day brought increased affection for her to the breast of Matthew, who loved with all that tender and unbounded, though refined, ardour natural to such a mind as his.

By her appointment he attended as a minstrel at Mr. Leslie's masquerade, and there it may well be imagined the variety of emotions he underwent; he beheld before him his father, and all his paternal kindred, who knew not at that time they had such a relative as himself in existence; he longed to throw himself at his father's feet, and receive his paternal blessings and embrace—and various feelings so agitated his heart, that, though fondly returned love was the most predominant, yet he was obliged to hasten sooner than he desired from the festive scene.

Lucy Ringwood, at this time, was assailed by an host of suitors; of some her aunt approved, who much wished to see her well and respectably married, before she herself was gathered to her ancestors: Matthew Marsham, among the rest, might not, perhaps, have applied in vain, had he been wealthier, and not dependent on his profession for support; for Mrs. Susan had been fully convinced by her late sister, though yet ignorant whose child he was, that he was *not* the son of the man who was generally suspected; for Ellen had at length, told her that *she* knew, but was under a solemn oath not to divulge it; at the same time, she could take another equally solemn, that he was not the son of Thomas Smith: as to the name of Marsham, that had never struck Mrs. Susan, as the only time she ever saw Ralph was at the harvest-supper, and the Miss Bradburys shortly after took a journey to London, where they stayed till after Mr. Marsham had quitted the house of Mr. Matthews; and in fact, if she *had* heard his name, she had entirely forgotten it.

Lucy, the cherished, and almost spoiled child of her kind aunt, affected now an *etourderie* and caprice, by no means natural to her excellent character; which made her lovers fall off, one after the other, to the astonishment of every one, and to the branding of her own conduct, as giddy, trifling, and inconsistent.



When Matthew came to take possession of his inheritance, how surprised was his Lucy, and how overjoyed to find that he stood in something of a relationship to the dearest friend of her heart, Mrs. Harrington.

Mrs. Susanna Bradbury, when Edward, who had no secrets from her, imparted to her the clause in his late brother's will, took no notice of having known him before. Ellen had rather offended the jealousy of sisterly affection, in hazarding her resentment, and giving up every thing to the enthusiastic dictates of the female friendship of early youth: she, therefore, always desirous of feeling that gay and cheerful disposition so natural to her, and which she could now evince without censure, sedulously drove from her remembrance every thing likely to give her pain; and never suffered her tongue to utter the sorrows of days gone by, nor her mind to dwell on the retrospect of aught that had given a cloud to the natural bright cheerfulness of her benevolent mind: and as *she* was much altered in person, and had not seen Matthew since he was quite a child, they met as perfect strangers to each other.

Edward Marsham acquitted himself now of the unpleasant office his nephew had assigned him: he found Mrs. Susanna and her lovely niece seated at work, in their little summer parlour: the first words from Mrs. Susan, after the usual salutations were over, were, "Pray, is Mr. Matthew Marsham yet returned?" while a deep blush crimsoned the cheeks of Lucy, and the sparkle of love added new lustre to her intelligent eye; when the Curate replied in the affirmative.

But how soon is the cup of bliss dashed from the lip of mortality, as it hastens to sip its palatable ingredients! Edward said, "My visit to you, ladies, this morning, is on his account." And unable, from his own emotions to say more, with an air of solemnity, delivered the letter to Lucy, and the parchment to her aunt.

Mrs. Susan put on her spectacles and prepared to break the seals; she thought nothing particular—the Curate was not a man of many words; but a smile generally lighted up his countenance when he was addressing the young and innocent, and the agitation which the freezing gravity of his present demeanour imparted to the mind of Lucy, made her move to withdraw. "Read it here, my good girl," said Edward, in a tender and compassionate accent, which made Lucy tremble as she broke the *sombre* seal; it represented Cupid weeping over two hearts, divided by a bar, and encircled by a motto—"Divided by duty." But when her eye glanced over the few lines wherein her Matthew took a last, though a tender and affectionate farewell, it was too much for her nature to support; she gave a faint shriek, and fell senseless on the floor.

Mrs. Susan, all terror and dismay, summoned the servants, and with the assistance of volatiles, they soon brought the unhappy girl to an awakened sense of her wretched situation. Mrs. Susan, to rally her spirits, affected a gaiety she then by no means felt: "Here's a pretty business indeed," said she; "why you do not know the good fortune I have got here for you in this little bit of parchment: many a poor girl would almost lose her senses with joy; but I hope you will recover your spirits, when I tell you that you are here bequeathed an independent fortune of ten thousand pounds!"—"Oh! rather," replied Lucy, not knowing what she said, "rather give me poverty with him, the most generous of men: he finds me rich, and he thinks himself unworthy of me!"

"What does all this mean?" said Mrs. Susan, taking up the letter which her niece had dropped; and as she read it, a little displeasure appeared seated on her placid brow;

not that she disapproved the worthy object on whom her beloved Lucy had placed her affections; but the term, “our *long* attachment,” in the letter, proved that a clandestine correspondence had been carried on, by a niece who was indulged in all her wishes, always encouraged to place unlimited confidence in her kind aunt, and whom that aunt had imagined artlessness itself.

Taking off her spectacles, she said, with much gravity, “However, Miss Ringwood, a clause in this codicil will shew you that an union with Mr. Matthew Marsham is forbidden you; and, of course, whatever affliction it may give you, will be impracticable.” She then read as follows, after resuming her optical glasses.

“I wrote my restricting and ardent wishes to my son, Matthew Marsham, that honour and generosity might never make him aspire to an union with Lucy Ringwood: as we cannot foresee future events, I think it best thus to prevent a marriage which I wish, on account of the above-mentioned noble principles, never to take place. To prevent, therefore, the whole of the sum of twenty thousand pounds sterling ever coming again into the hands of my son, the said Matthew Marsham, this bequest of ten thousand pounds, being the half of all the fortune I leave in ready money, devolves only to Lucy Ringwood on condition that she never marries the said Matthew Marsham, my son. If such an unlooked-for union ever *should* take place, the ten thousand pounds devolves to her aunt, Susanna Bradbury, and at her death to go to John Besborough, banker, in ——”

The tears of Lucy Ringwood now streamed afresh: Mr. Marsham had yet the packet of papers in his pocket, which he had forgotten to deliver to his nephew; but now, hastily acceding to the painful impulse of his feelings, he presented it to Mrs. Susan, and said, “Dear madam, read over, as soon as you are at leisure, these papers; you will there see the generous and delicate reason of this restriction: I am happy to find it thus expressed in the parchment; Matthew is rich enough, and two amiable young people may yet be happy, without the addition of ten thousand pounds. Farewell, comfort the poor little drooping blossom!” and with parental affection he kissed her cheek as he took his leave, and as he bade her aunt good morning, the good lady’s aspect became more serene, and holding the papers in one hand, as she cordially and gracefully gave the other to Edward, she said, “My much respected and excellent friend, Lucy well knows that I can never long be displeased with her; and if she relates, with that sweet candour so natural to her, and without any prevarication, the commencement and continuance of her first acquaintance with Mr. Matthew Marsham, whom I already feel myself disposed to be partial to, and the whole tenor of these young people’s conduct gives me as much satisfaction as I am almost sure the perusal of these papers will, as recommended by you, I shall readily pardon what I am sorry to say has at present a great appearance of duplicity on her part.”

Edward had imparted that morning, to one part of the family, the pleasing tidings of augmented wealth; he now felt the flattering hope that he might also impart happiness and the bright bliss of successful love to the other: alas! for himself, there threatened a fatal cloud to obscure his peace, and now ready to burst over his head as sudden as it was unexpected.

## CHAP. XXIII.

## THE RESULT OF INTRIGUE.

—————He left the nymph,  
To think on what was past, and sigh alone.

ROWE.

—————By thee  
The nobleness of love has been dishonour'd  
And her delicious sweetness, all by thee,  
Is turn'd to bitterness.—————

AMINTA OF TASSO

ON the return of the Reverend Mr. Marsham to his daughter's cottage, he observed a kind of dismay seated on the countenances of the servants: on enquiry, he found Sir Edward Harrington had ordered his horses, and departed for London with all possible speed; promising, however, to return as soon as possible.

"Had he received any *special* letter?" asked Mr. Marsham, for the post had arrived long before he went out. "No," they replied, "he had been engaged with Mrs. Harrington all the morning, as she practised an Italian air on the Spanish guitar;" and Mrs. Harrington's footman said, "he had heard Sir Edward remark to his mistress, that he was so sure there was not any news in the papers, he had not read them since their arrival: when he came into the room to see to the fire, Mrs. Harrington was performing her lesson for the third time; and he heard her say, as she looked at her watch, that it was getting so late, she should not have time to dress herself by dinner: after she left the parlour, he saw Sir Edward take up the newspapers, and almost immediately after ordered his horses and departed." In a few minutes after, his servant rode back, requesting the footman of Mrs. Harrington to give him all the newspapers; but he could not find them; and he afterwards found they were taken out of the library, and laid on the breakfast-table, with the directions put on them again, as Mr. Marsham saw them.—"Where is your mistress?" said Edward.—"In her dressing-room, sir," replied the servant, "where she has locked herself in, and desired that no one may interrupt her."

Edward in vain endeavoured to persuade himself that perhaps she had finished her toilette, and might be in earnest application over some of the many accomplishments she had to attend to; but then he felt assured, from the sudden departure of his noble guest, after his perusal of the news, that something fatal had befallen the Harrington family.

He took up the MORNING POST, he hastily skimmed it over, and reverted to his favourite political register, the TIMES; and after he had scanned over the dearth of home news and foreign politics contained at that time, even in *this* paper, and read the probable changes in the cabinet, in which perhaps he began to imagine Sir Edward Harrington might be personally interested, and have had some reason, on that score, for his sudden departure; when his eye glanced on a paragraph, which he read with real anguish of mind, and which ran nearly in the following words:

“The conduct of Lady I——— R———D has, at length, so increased in notoriety, that after furnishing conversation for every inhabitant of Cromer, in Norfolk, she has actually eloped with the dashing and elegant Mr. H———N, the nephew of the rich, the excellent, and illustrious Sir E——— H———. The injured husband, Major R———D, a most deserving officer, had pursued the fugitives; and, with anguish unspeakable, received ocular proofs of his wife’s infidelity. What particularly aggravates the fault of MR. H———N, is, that he has been only a few months married to a beautiful and amiable young lady in Essex. This notorious *faux-pas* in the fashionable world, it is thought, will furnish ample matter for the gentlemen of the long robe, in the display of their oratorical talents; and no doubt enormous damages will be obtained by Major R———D, an accomplished and handsome young man, the avowed object of her ladyship’s virgin choice, and a most affectionate and tender husband.”

The TIMES, when attacking characters in high life, has often had the reputation, we will not say whether deservedly or not, of being rather libellous; but though all the late conduct of Frederic Harrington seemed but too well to tally with this fatal news, yet, as the drowning man will catch at a straw, so poor Edward felt a faint, alas! a *very* faint glimmering of hope that this might be an exaggerated account. He recollected that the MORNING POST was the first of all papers for fashionable intelligence; an article he scarcely ever attended to, unless it was to deplore the expence of luxury,

“———straining her low thought,  
“To form unreal wants———”

while worthy poverty industriously laboured, and with difficulty could earn one daily meal.

He now took up this vehicle of intelligence, and eagerly glanced his anxious eye over the miscellaneous paragraphs: he there read *all*, and *more* than the other paper had reported; even the names were not all initialized, but boldly informed the public that Major RAYMOND intended to apply immediately for a divorce, and had engaged the famous Serjeant B. to plead his cause in Westminster Hall; while Mr. H. had retained for his counsel the learned and eloquent Mr. G———. The reader was likewise informed, through this polite channel of fashionable news, that Major Raymond, in company with a brother-officer, after tracing the fugitives to an inn on the London road, was an eye-witness of his own disgrace: however, this paper did not speak quite so much in favour of the Major; it appeared rather to hint a connivance on the part of the husband, with a view to obtain enormous damages; which connivance, if proved, would infallibly end in his deserved disappointment, and draw on him the contempt he so amply merited. But all this did not heal the wound inflicted by this poisoned arrow on the hearts of the worthy curate and his daughter; neither did it extenuate Harrington’s guilt.

The HERALD and the COURIER gave the paragraph in much the same words as the TIMES; but the latter made some excellent and moral reflexions on the enormity of that crime, which is become so prevalent in this country; and particularly dwelt on the aggravation of Mr. Harrington’s fault, as being so lately married to a young lady, who had been his fondest choice, and who, though not yet known in the great world, was allowed to do honour to his taste, and was a pattern of amiableness, virtue, and loveliness.

The heart of Edward was now in such extreme anguish, that the full tide of sorrow which overwhelmed it burst from his eyes, and leaning his face on his hands over the fatal newspapers, he gave way to the womanish relief of tears, unheeding of the servant, who had told him twice that dinner was waiting, and at length gently touched his elbow to repeat the information: he requested a glass of water to compose his agitated spirits, and then with all the tranquillity he could assume, repaired to the dining-parlour.

He there found his daughter, the image of silent woe: ever mistress of herself, Mary had been always accustomed to conceal any agitation of mind from her servants; but though they would never hear their master's fault from her lips, yet she well knew concealment would be in vain in this instance.

She had seated herself, with a pallid countenance, and the roseate hue, which always embellished her cheek and lip, now only encircled her eyes; in vain she endeavoured to eat, and appear tranquil; in vain she pressed her father to eat likewise; his appetite, like hers, was fled, and the dinner went away almost untouched.

When the servants were withdrawn, the bursting sorrow again found its way from the sweet eyes of Mary: her father drew his chair towards her, and as she leaned forward to return his embrace, the consolation of having such a worthy parent, the dread of adding to his grief on her account, made her endeavour to dry her tears, and essay to impart that comfort of which she herself stood most in need.

"Be still yourself, my angel daughter," said he, as he pressed her to his fond bosom; "perhaps your virtues, your sweetness, mingled with dignity, and void of all clamorous reproaches, may reclaim the wanderer, and you may in the end be happy."—"Never!" replied Mary, with a solemn kind of assurance that she never could be so again: "the sweet delusion is fled for ever, which taught me to think that my Frederic was mine, and mine alone! If so soon he shews the fickleness and inconstancy of his nature, what have I not to expect as years roll on, and the probable loss of some of these poor attractions I possess are fled! Cheerfulness, the bright prospect of that happiness which I constantly looked forward to in my union with Harrington, will no longer animate my countenance, or impart lustre to my now continually weeping eyes: to cheerful vivacity, will succeed lowering care; mistrust and jealous fears will, with my disappointed views, cloud all my features, and render sallow that cheek which my deceiver has often kissed as he likened it to the fresh-blown rose. I too well know the powerful and seductive charms of my rival: supreme in beauty, as in wit and accomplishments, she possesses also that fascination which will for ever supplant me, and stamp her image indelible on the heart of Frederic."

"Pardon me, my beloved," said Edward, "you have been, hitherto, accustomed, with your happy disposition, to behold life in its fairest perspective; but the little *worldly* knowledge you boast, has caused you, when a real misfortune assails you, to fear the worst. I am much deceived in Mr. Harrington, if he is not now, by the influence of modern manners, acting under a false character: for there always seemed in him, under the painted mask of fashionable dissipation, an inward love for virtue, and oft-times a severe reprehension of his own thoughtless conduct. Believe me, my dear one, that a man can never long admire a woman devoid of principle, and who sets virtue at defiance as prudish grimace."

“But such a woman, surely, is not Lady Isabella Raymond,” said Mary; “whom my unhappy husband has seduced from the path of honour!”—“*He seduce her?*” said Edward, with contempt; “no, no, Mary, it is *she* who is the seducer: and though I greatly blame, and even detest the conduct of Mr. Harrington towards you, yet I still look forward with hope, that a great and entire reformation will be worked in his conduct, even by this atrocious error, and that you and your virtues will become dearer to him than ever. A woman who breaks through all the sacred ties of conjugal duty, who to a life of honour, decency, and decorum, prefers that of guilt, giving way to the indulgence of passion, is never esteemed by a man after the enthusiasm of desire is grown languid by possession; and without esteem, love is but of short duration. It is this known truth in the married state, which renders it so essential for a man to choose his partner rather for virtue and mental qualifications than beauty; the one he gets accustomed to—each day it fades before his eyes; while the others increase in attraction: he esteems more and more what is so valuable, and loves what he esteems.”—“But think, my dear sir,” said Mary, “of the wonderful abilities and accomplishments of Lady Isabella!”

“*Acquirements* only, my dear,” said Edward, “they are not the virtues of the heart and mind; for six or *seven* shillings,” added he, smiling, “Mr. Harrington may go to the theatre, and behold and hear all the fascinating accomplishments of his *once* adored Isabella represented on the stage, for I dare say she is no *longer* adored! but rather becoming a very troublesome appendage to him.”—“But, as a man of honour,” said Mary, “he must not quit her; she can never again return to her husband’s home; her friends will not look upon her: Frederic, for whom she has sacrificed so much, must not leave her destitute: I really think, sooner than the unhappy woman should be driven to distress, I could grant her an asylum, and be tempted almost to act like Lady Gresham\*, in the affair of her husband and Lady Harriet Egmont.”

“Such conduct, I think,” said her father, gravely, “is a misplaced generosity, which borders upon want of feeling, and shews rather too much tameness in a wife. I, certainly, as well as yourself, would not wish Mr. Harrington to leave a woman in distress, as he has been the *primary* cause of her being for ever banished her husband’s roof, and despised in the eyes of the world: but she must not become an inmate in the same house with a virtuous wife; for, in order to be truly reconciled to that injured wife, he must never behold the partner in his crime again.”

It may be easily imagined that, though the excellent father often tried to converse with his daughter on general matters, yet their discourse continually reverted to the subject that was nearest their hearts. In the evening numerous country visitors called; but Mrs. Harrington was not at home to any one; too well she knew the secret motive of such visits, and found her cottage would be no place for her to remain in for the present: in which opinion she was further strengthened the next morning by receiving the following letter from Sir Edward Harrington to her father.

“Dear and respected friend;

“WHEN I so suddenly left the hospitable home of my dear niece yesterday, I intended shortly to have returned to it; mature reflection, however, tells me it is better she should quit it for a time; exposed alike to a painful retrospect of past felicity, and the

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\* *Historique*

visits of impertinent curiosity, concealed under the mask of condolence, I think it best that you repair with the dear sufferer immediately to the vicinity of London, where she will be less known, and less liable to interruption: at the same time, actually in the metropolis, my niece cannot reside as MRS. HARRINGTON, without subjecting herself to be the public talk. I have, therefore, hired a pleasant, furnished little villa, on the banks of the Thames, at Twickenham, where she may be as retired as she pleases, and see only those few friends she wishes: yourself, I particularly desire to remain in town for a day or two, when I will introduce you personally to the Chancellor; as I trust his Lordship will, in a few days, put you in possession of an excellent benefice, now vacant, and in his gift. As soon as you can possibly make your arrangements for the journey, leave the housekeeper and gardener to take charge of the cottage, and come immediately to my house in St. James's Square, where you will be cordially and affectionately welcomed by

“Your ever true friend,

“EDWARD HARRINGTON.”

The Reverend Mr. Marsham and his daughter lost no time in hastening their departure from Eglantine; a clergyman, a few miles off, consenting to perform the parochial duty for the good curate during his absence. The bustle, the change of scene, by employing the natural energy of Mary's mind for a few days, made her, in some degree, forget the deep anguish which had lately assailed her; but sleepless nights, as she sought repose on her pillow, told her that her grief only slumbered, but still existed: a sound and heavy sleep towards morning, or flattering dreams of Frederic's constancy and fond affection, has caused her to wake, to the sad reverse of wretchedness and tears: she has then quickly risen, again to employ herself, and try, if possible, to fly from thought and from herself.

While an affectionate father mourned over the sorrows of a virtuous child, his griefs were, in part, but begun; his youngest daughter had become the prey of a villain's systematic arts, whose fugitive inclination for her person was now succeeded by disgust, and she already experienced from him the most contemptuous neglect. Poor Margaret, whose personal attractions scarcely approached to mediocrity, without one elegant accomplishment to compensate for the deficiency of them; a slattern in her dress, with all the affectation of a female pedant; was not likely long to retain the attention of a libertine admirer: she had good-nature, sincerity, and an heart *too tender*; but these are poor qualifications, when there is nothing else to be thrown into the scale to make it preponderate. The corroding sorrow of her heart, the tears she shed in secret, by no means contributed to heighten the very few *agrémens* of person she possessed from nature; and the wretched girl was in that state

“Which women wish to be who love their lords,”

but which Margaret was much afflicted at discovering; for when she imparted the unwelcome news to Sir Charles, he said it was “*devilish* unlucky,” he was “*confoundedly* sorry to hear it,” but “what would she have *him* do?” She saw him afterwards but very seldom, and then he scarcely took any notice of her.

Mrs. Davenport, inspired by rage and jealousy, accused her of her criminal intrigue with Sir Charles Sefton; the tears and blushes of the unhappy Margaret too plainly told the truth of what her tongue denied: and when she found the unkindness of Mrs. Davenport increase towards her, when she hourly endured, and trembled at the threats of that lady, to acquaint her father with her faulty conduct, she resolved on visiting Sir Charles at his house, and endeavouring by tears and all the persuasion she was mistress off, to intreat him to take her under his protection. Repeatedly did she make her morning visits, while the surly porter as oft uncivilly told her his master was not at home; and when she once urged that she saw him at the window, "Aye, child," said the porter, "but he does not choose to be at home to you; and this is no time; his ladies always come of an evening: not that I think," added he, looking in her face and insolently laughing, "that he will *see you!* however, if you have a mind to come to-morrow night, I believe he will be at home."

Somewhat comforted to hear that there was a prospect of her seeing him on the morrow, she went home; she knew Mrs. Davenport was going to the theatre in the evening of the morrow, and that she should be left alone; for she now never went with her in public. The poor girl's spirits were this day better, being rather elevated by hope; but the behaviour of Mr. and Mrs. Davenport to her was not only rude and uncivil, but cutting in the extreme: the *trio* dined together, and as they were taking their wine after, Mr. Davenport made many animadversions on the depravity of taste; for Mr. Davenport detested a woman, if she was not very pretty: "Oh! by heaven," said he, "any ugly devil now may get a lover; we shall have a d——d pretty breed, I expect, in the next generation: well, thank God, I don't suppose I shall live to see the baboons, for I'm going, as fast as I can, to the d——l; so, Emily, you'll be a handsome dashing widow, with a good jointure, my girl—" "Which I'll keep to myself," said the gay lady, "whenever you *kick*, Davenport, depend upon it; love who I please; but marry no more; and the age is not so nice, but many a dear soul, free as myself, will caress and visit me."—"No, no," replied her husband, "you are right, Emily, the age is not *nice*, upon my soul! why I was told the other day," and he glanced his eyes full upon Margaret, "that a poor yellow looking devil of a baronet, the exact complexion of a china orange, with jaws like a frog, has an affair with a little ugly, broken-toothed toad, newly come from the country;—and there's the devil to pay; Miss is going to present him with a young cub, which, I dare say, will be the exact likeness of an ourang-outang." Mrs. Davenport forced a smile; she did not much like her once favoured swain to be so handled by the satiric genius of Mr. Davenport: but venting her mortification upon Margaret, she said, "Pray, child, is your sister like you, at all, in person? I never saw her since she was a little child; and I then thought she promised to be pretty."—"She is reckoned so, generally, madam," said Margaret.—"Oh! well then," said Mrs. Davenport, "without any offence to Miss Marsham, it is impossible there can be any likeness."—"No, sir," said Margaret, "we do not resemble each other at all, except that our mouths are alike."—"Why, what the d——!" said Mr. Davenport, "has she lost her *front teeth* too?"—"Oh! no," said the good-natured Margaret, who could not help smiling at the laugh this caused Mrs. Davenport; "our *teeth* are not alike, only—" "Well, well," said Mrs. Davenport, "I must say, Margaritta, that your mouth is pretty enough." Mr. Davenport took his eyes off his dessert-plate, and was condescending enough to acknowledge the truth of the remark by an assenting nod with



his head. "Well," said Mrs. Davenport, "go where I will, I hear nothing but the present scandal of the day; Harrington's amour with Lady Isabella Raymond—and, indeed, I do think any man is excusable in going astray with such a woman."—"She would be an absolute divinity," said Davenport, "if she was not so cursed satirical; but it was not at all likely that such a fine dashing fellow as Harrington would tie himself to a country girl; besides, he always, I am told, loved Lady Isabella; and no doubt she is far superior to Mrs. Harrington, though they say she is a nice little creature:—by heaven, I think I'll go down and see the pining bride, and advise her to the retort courteous! Come, Margaritta, tell us," continued he, as he helped her to a glass of port, "now, without any partiality, suppose Mrs. Harrington was not your sister,—which is the handsomest, your sister or the divine Isabella?" Margaret, who always thought, that in her life she had never seen so resplendent a beauty as Lady Isabella, said, without hesitation, "Oh! sir, Lady Isabella, certainly." But the heart of Margaret was full; it rose to her throat, and almost choked her utterance: she reflected on her sister's misfortune, and how cruelly the infidelity of Harrington must have operated on a mind like hers; and, bringing her thoughts home to her own sorrows, the perfidy of man, the unfeeling behaviour of those she thought once her best benefactors, caused her, in spite of all her efforts to restrain her feelings, to burst into an agony of tears.

"Why, what is the matter with the girl?" said Mrs. Davenport.—"Indeed, ma'am," replied Margaret, "I cannot think of my dear sister's misfortunes, without being much affected; it is a painful subject to me, and if you and Mr. Davenport wish to converse any more upon it, will you permit me to withdraw: I dearly love my sister, I always did, indeed I *do still*; I wish I did not affectionately love Lady Isabella."

"Lord bless me, child!" said Mrs. Davenport, "these things are nothing in fashionable life; and pray, why should you wish you did not love Lady Isabella?—pray, what violent harm has she done? For, as to Harrington's fortune, that she will not much injure, as it is a notorious fact, and will come all out on the trial, that Major Raymond has been aiding and assisting in this little *faux-pas* of his wife. But, mark me, Margaritta, when I say\* these things are nothing in fashionable life; and where a woman is *married*, and consequently *privileged* to commit many freedoms which are quite *unbecoming* in a *girl*, yet a young woman, who has not a shilling, must be very careful to preserve her modesty and good name, for it is all she has to depend upon;—you understand me, Margaritta, I am sure: I wish I could say, that I hope things are not so bad as they have been represented to me; but I am sorry to say, I have seen too much myself:—go, and arrange your hair, and put on a little of my *rouge*—you look like a witch: I have a few friends coming to-night."

Margaret trembled, lest her father might chance to be one of them, and hastily withdrew to perform the orders of Mrs. Davenport; whom she left laughing heartily at some new sallies of her husband's wit upon Mrs. Harrington, the deserted bride, whom he swore he would go and comfort, promising himself certain success: but sitting about a quarter of an hour longer with his wife, to whom he was uncommonly polite and attentive, he repaired to pass the evening with his favourite Sultana, while his lady entertained at home a party of dashing *beaux*, and a bevy of gay females; amongst whom

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\* *Historique*.

Margaret remained like a cypher, unnoticed, except by the whisper of Mrs. Davenport to one or two of her particular friends, and the shrugs and sneers of the gentlemen.

At length the eventful evening arrived, and Margaret, after Mrs. Davenport had driven to the theatre, stole softly down stairs, and with a beating heart and trembling feet, escaped into the street.

It was dark; she was young and well dressed; her bonnet and pelisse made in the highest style of fashion: she had never been in the street alone, before, in the evening; she was accosted by many smart-looking young men; she thought that surely she had captivated them by her appearance, and she hoped the most delightful success, from the self-conviction of her personal charms, which must have been so striking on that evening, when, in walking from Grosvenor Square to St. James's Street, she had been called "pretty girl," "sweet little dear," and earnestly requested by several dashing looking men, as she thought them, the permission of escorting her home: these *dashers* were, however, chiefly men-milliners, tavern-waiters, servants out of livery, and markers at the gambling-tables, and who were either going to their several avocations, or taking a lounge after their dinners, and affecting the fine gentlemen.

She arrived at Sir Charles Sefton's door, and knocked at it with all the buoyant spirit she just then felt. "Ah! what, is it you, my dear?" said the porter. "Pray, who are you speaking to?" said she, offended at his familiarity. "I'll be d——d if I know," said he, holding the door half open; "but Sir Charles is not at home." "You told me he would be," said Margaret. "So I believe he will," said the porter, stretching himself, and yawning, "when the play is over; he has ordered supper at home."—"Then cannot I sit down in one of the apartments, and await his return? Sir Charles knows me very well, and I am sure he will be glad to see me."—"Oh! like enough," said the porter, "my master knows a great many young ladies; but as *you are* quite *un-known* to *me*, having never been admitted here, I can't let you in." So saying, he slammed the door in her face. Poor Margaret burst into tears; but resolving to see Sir Charles that night, even if she should never again be admitted within Mrs. Davenport's doors, she determined on staying till the performance at the theatre was ended.

As an Eastern writer has justly observed, "Who is it that regardeth sorrow in the public streets? who is there but turneth away the face and fleeth from her?" The weeping Margaret, now no more accosted in the language of promiscuous admiration, was jostled about from one side to the other; the rude porter with his load, almost knocked her down; the whistling 'prentice drove her nearly into the kennel; the newsman blew his horn in her ear; while the chairmen drove her almost before them with their poles, and then, laughing, cried out, "By your leave!" The fear that accompanies the pedestrians in London, who are unused to ramble in the dark, generally, by betraying itself, subjects them to every insult and danger; and there is no other way to escape nocturnal buffetings and terrors inflicted by the *canaille*, than by walking with the appearance of undaunted resolution, or with the affected bustle of urgent business.

The moon now began to rise in full splendour, and, added to the lamps and the bright passages of the gaming and coffee-houses, imparted a brilliant illumination to the street. An hackney-coach stopped at a shop opposite to where Margaret was standing; she crossed over, though from what motive she knew not, except to give some kind of variation to her nightly walk. A gentleman got out, and handed out a lady, who was

closely wrapped in a dark coloured shawl, and who wore a large bonnet which entirely concealed her face. The gentleman attempted to follow her into the house, but she said, "No, no—we never meet again, except on ONE condition." He bowed with solemnity, and reascended the carriage. The lady entered the house, after waving her hand to the servant to take away the light, and the door suddenly closed with a kind of caution. The gentleman was wrapped in a curricle-coat, the cape buttoned over his cheeks, while a slouch hat hid the upper part of his face. Of the gentleman or lady Margaret had not the slightest recollection; but the lady seemed to interest her, and she was almost certain she had heard her voice before; she felt herself unable to move from the door after it was shut; she watched its re-opening, she looked up at the windows, but all were close shut; and a still silence seemed to prevail about the house.

The rattle of carriages from various directions now announced the close of the theatrical entertainment; and seeing Sir Charles Sefton's chariot draw up to his door, she almost hazarded her life, by nimbly crossing, amidst throngs of carriages, and arrived time enough to see him hand out a lady richly dressed, while another carriage stopped, from which descended two more ladies and two gentlemen, all apparently of the first fashion. She waited the departure of the carriages, and then again presented herself before the Cerberus of the hall.

"Why it is impossible you can see Sir Charles now," said the porter, "he has brought home company to supper." "Oh! tell him," said Margaret, "that a lady wishes only to speak *one* word with him." "Oh! that is not my office," replied he; but the solitary dollar in Margaret's *ridicule*, transferred from thence into his hand, made him relent, though he shrugged his shoulders at the *smallness* of the bribe; however, calling a footman who just then crossed the hall, he told Margaret she had better go to the fire and warm herself till he had brought down an answer.

The footman soon came down, saying, that he was sure he could not say when he should be able to speak to his master, he was so engaged; but she had better walk into that room, shewing her a little dark side-parlour, in which was no fire, and where he left her with one solitary bit of candle, which soon began to glimmer in the socket; and the wretched girl sat shivering with cold, and without even the comfort of light: she heard the watchman cry the hour of half-past one, and a starlight morning. To return to Mr. Davenport's she now found would be impracticable, and she trembled at the result. Presently she heard the door softly open.

Not being able to distinguish objects from the shutters being closed, the fond idea rushed upon her mind that it was her dear Sir Charles; but she was soon undeceived by the footman saying, "What, are you in the dark, miss? I have at last, with much difficulty, spoken to Sir Charles; he says it is totally impossible for him to see you now, but, if you like, you may call at half-past eleven in the morning. Here, David," added he, addressing the porter, "Shew a light to this young lady, and open the door for her."

Margaret still leant on the hope of seeing her perfidious lover in the morning, and strolled to the Park, determined there to pass the night: the sentries hailed her, as she crossed the stable-yard, with "Who comes there?" She knew not how to reply, and they suffered her to pass on in silence, as they deemed it might not be impossible but that she had an appointment with the sergeant of the guard, or, perhaps, a higher military hero in rank, to pass the night with him, *sub rosa*.

She crossed the Park, and the moon retiring, while night was “at odds with morning,” she repaired to a solitary bench in the most retired part of this scenic promenade, and wrapping her pelisse around her, huddled herself up in one corner, awaiting the rising of the sun.

As in the case of Sterne’s *Le Fevre*, it “rose bright on almost every eye” in that vicinity, except on that of the afflicted Margaret: exhausted from fatigue, want of rest, and faint for want of food, she continued to wile away the tedious hours, in walking and re-seating herself, till the clock struck eleven. The grand, or the jocund strain of martial music, as the guards attended morning parade, only served, instead of raising her spirits, to sink them to a state of melancholy depression: the insolent remarks, the puppy exclamation of *d—d ugly!* continually assaulted her ears. At length, the Horse-Guards chimed a quarter past eleven: she rose with aching limbs, and retraced her steps to St. James’s street. The porter did not open the door, but an elderly female, who, when requested by Margaret to inform Sir Charles Sefton that she wished to speak to him, frowned suspiciously upon her, and said, “Why, Sir Charles left town this morning at half-past eight o’clock.” “Impossible!” said Margaret, “he desired me to be here at half-past eleven.” “Why, you may as well tell me, young woman,” said the housekeeper, “that I lie! I tell you, I and the porter are the only persons left here to take charge of the house; my master is going to-night, or to-morrow, to sail for the Madeiras, for the recovery of his health before he marries.”—“Marries!” echoed Margaret. “Why, yes,” said the housekeeper; “is that any thing wonderful? he is to be married, when he returns, to his cousin, Lady Louisa Walton: she took her leave of him with his two aunts, last night: why, la, if you know any thing of Sir Charles, you must know that it has been a fixed thing for some weeks; Lady Louisa has a most immense fortune.” Margaret, scarcely able to conceal her emotions, or articulate a sentence, said, “Will you, ma’am, have the kindness to give me a glass of water?”

The woman, seeing her ready to faint, did not then, as she was just going to do, shut the door in her face; but her hard features relaxing into a little expression, something like compassion, she told her, as she opened the half-closed entrance a little wider, to follow her down into her own room; where she gave her a bit of toast that was left frying on a plate before the fire, and a cup of half-cold tea, which she stirred for her, and then put the silver tea-spoon out of her reach: this temporary refreshment somewhat revived poor Margaret; but her head ached violently, and she took her leave of the unfeeling housekeeper, unknowing where to bend her course.

As she came nearly opposite to the shop where she had seen, the night before, the lady and gentleman alight from an hackney-coach, she stopped a little while and looked up at the windows: they were close shut; but in the second story she saw the shade of a female figure, as if peeping through a chamber-blind of gauze-like texture: she stood for some moments, pondering where she should go to escape observation, or the probable search of the Davenport’s after her; when a young girl put a sealed note in her hand, and begged she would be pleased to read it: it was written in a hand evidently disguised, and contained the following words:

“If, as I am almost assured, you are Miss Margaret Marsham, accompany the bearer, and enquire at the house she will bring you to, for Mrs. Frederic. I see you are unhappy: alas! I have suffered, and feel for every sufferer. From me you will receive all

the comfort a wretched being like myself can be capable of bestowing. But this I have yet to give you—the most cordial and *sisterly* affection.

“Whatever makes you thus a wanderer, fear not to confide to her, who loves you with more sincerity and tenderness than ever.”

Oh! thought Margaret, as she pressed the letter to her lips and heart, it is from my generous Mary! she has, to avoid being known, adopted the christian name of her faithless husband.—She then instantly followed the bearer, and almost flew to receive the embrace of a sister!

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## CHAP. XXIV.

## A MISTAKE.

—————Action treads the path  
 In which opinion says he follows good,  
 Or flies from evil; and opinion gives  
 Report of good or evil, as the scene  
 Was drawn by fancy, lovely or deform'd:  
 Thus her report can never there be true  
 Where fancy cheats the intellectual eye  
 With glaring colours and distorted lines.

AKENSIDE.

MRS. DAVENPORT had not been long departed for the theatre, when Edward Marsham called on her;—after passing the day with his worthy friend, Sir Edward Harrington, he thought he must in gratitude, take the earliest opportunity of visiting the kind benefactress of his daughter.

He therefore presented himself at the superb mansion of Mr. Davenport; and as the magnificent well-lighted hall and spacious staircases gleamed on his sight, evincing opulence and grandeur, he rejoiced in seeing the lovely friend of his late wife so splendidly established in life; yet a sigh escaped his bosom, when, in the elegant and often envied situation to which his Mary had been raised, she had experienced but little comfort in such glittering donations, which taste and affluence have in *their* power to bestow: Davenport might be, he reflected, another Harrington, and his wife might look back with unavailing regret to the rural scenes of Emily Maddison's more tranquil hours. Yes, Davenport had all Harrington's failings, but they had in Mr. Davenport degenerated into depravity; he had none of Mr. Harrington's good qualities: and Emily Davenport, only existing in the scenes of fashionable folly, and fluttering in a round of continual dissipation, would have died at the idea of again experiencing that state of quiet and genteel mediocrity enjoyed by Emily Maddison.

Edward was not sorry to hear that his daughter was at home alone; for, with a father's tender affection, he loved his poor Margaret with all her foibles; and he hoped her residence in town had taken off, in some degree, the romantic enthusiasm of her ideas: and, as he had frequently been told that both her person and manners were much improved, he flattered himself he should really find her more reasonable, and that he should have the satisfaction of enjoying with her an hour or two of social and rational conversation.

After waiting a considerable time in the drawing-room, he was at length informed that Miss Marsham could no where be found; and that Mademoiselle Minette was out, who could give the most positive assurance whether or no Miss Marsham had accompanied Mrs. Davenport to the theatre, as the above-mentioned French lady presided over their toilettes: the other servants said they were almost sure she did not go with their mistress; while the porter in the hall said, no person was with her except Miss Benworth

and two gentlemen, which four persons just filled the coach. Edward, however, concluding she *had* gone with Mrs. Davenport, felt no anxiety, and leaving his card, saying he would call the next morning, went to his temporary habitation at the good Baronet's, in St. James's Square.

These fashionable servants, who had always looked upon Margaret as a dependent on their master and mistress, never heeded whether or no she had descended from the carriage at the return of the *partie quarrée*; and Margaret was never thought of till the hour of one, when, after partaking of a few sandwiches and other slight refreshments, the company departed. "Well, I always forget that girl," said Mrs. Davenport; "do, Robert, order some one to go to Miss Marsham's apartment, and tell her to come and take a sandwich and a glass of wine-and-water before she goes to bed."

Robert then mentioned his not being able to find her when her father called. "It is singular," said Mrs. Davenport, addressing her husband in French; "but I dare say she stole out to take leave of her lover; and is now retired to her chamber, to weep over his departure."—"What do you mean?" said Mr. Davenport. "Oh!" said she, continuing the subject in her own native language at the departure of Robert; "will you believe that Sir Charles Sefton took leave of me to-night, as he quitted my private box, for he is going to Madeira to-morrow." "The d——l he is?" said Davenport. "Yes, and he had that *she-monkey* of a woman with him, in *his* box, Lady Louisa Walton, his rich cousin."—"What a precious ugly pair they *will* make!" said Mr. Davenport. "Well," replied his lady, endeavouring to smile, but looking very spiteful, "I fairly sent him out of my box with confusion; I asked him what his *beautiful* favourite, Miss Marsham, would do without him? He stammered, hesitated, and with the most awkward air in the world, wished me and my party a good night. I shall be glad when he is *gone*," continued she, her eyes giving the lie to her tongue; "and I'm heartily glad too," added she, with much more sincerity, "that Margaritta's father's *come*, and that I can wash my hands of her."

Mr. Davenport said, "I'm cursed sorry this affair has happened in *my* house; I shall be sorry to pain the good man." "Oh! that I think we need not," said Mrs. Davenport; "let us only get Mr. Marsham to take her away again, we will make her a handsome present; and after he gets her home, let him find it out himself: we need not be supposed to know any thing about it."—"That's a devilish good thought, Emily," said Mr. Davenport: he pondered, however, some time, as if in deep reflection. "Let Minette," said he, after he had been silent a few minutes, "see if the girl is in bed; we have sent for her to supper, but you see she is not to be found again." Miss Marsham was not, however, in her bed, nor in any part of the house.

"By heaven," said Mr. Davenport, "I'm afraid, Emily, that Sir Charles is fool enough to think of taking the girl off with him to Madeira; there is no doubt but that the consequence of her indiscretion is likely very soon to appear: the fellow does not seem possessed of much feeling; yet, perhaps the idea of being a father, may make him take some care of the mother, till such time as the *dear creature* presents him with his *ape-like* countenance; then he may make her a trifling settlement, sufficient to maintain her there, and I really think it is the best thing he can do.—Well, sure such a pair was never seen!"

"I declare, Davenport," said his Lady, "you are quite spiteful about Sir Charles. I think his appearance by no means deserving ridicule; I am sure he is quite the gentleman and man of fashion."—"Quite so, my dear, but, by the bye, confounded ugly. Don't be

uneasy, Emily, if I tell you something that I saw to-night. As I was coming out of Boodle's rather earlier than I usually do, for I could find by the carriages the play was but just over, I could neither find my rascals nor the chariot; I suppose they had gone to take a peep at the riot that was expected to take place at the theatre: I walked on, however, as you know I am not devoted to gaming, and finding myself in the losing vein, I had no inclination to return; so telling the porter at the door to inform my servants when they came, that I had walked home, the night being uncommonly fine, I made a stroll of it. As I passed opposite to Sir Charles Sefton's house, I am almost sure I plainly perceived your Margaritta go into it: I knew her by the grey bonnet and pelisse you gave her last week;—because my Cora once saw her walking in it with you, in Kensington Gardens, the little tasty hussy would never let me rest till I purchased one resembling it for her. The moon shone full upon the lady at Sefton's door, and at first I took it to be Cora herself; but looking circumspectly, I soon saw the difference in *Meg's* high shoulders and broad back, to those of \* my divinity; so I dare say the happy lovers will be off to-morrow morning; and d——n it, let them alone, I think it very fortunate for us—our house will not be disgraced, nor your care and prudence the least called in question." Mrs. Davenport burst into tears.

Now we cannot pretend to take upon ourselves to say what was the actual cause of those tears, but we are very much inclined to believe, that, really liking Sir Charles Sefton, she could not support the idea of Margaret accompanying him across the seas, and receiving from him daily proofs of his regard and attentions: the bare thought, no doubt, stung her mind with all the bitter vexation of jealousy. It could not be for the fate of the poor girl, whom she cared but little about; it could not be jealousy of a little actress who had once performed the part of Cora, in *Pizarro*, and with whom her husband was so enraptured, that he took her from the stage, and she performed in public no more; in *private* she acted the part of a most extravagant and expensive mistress: but Mrs. Davenport knew all this before, and had never evinced any displeasure: so we really believe the *primary* cause was jealousy of Sir Charles and Margaret.

"My dear Emily," said Mr. Davenport, "you know I cannot bear to see you in tears; what can I do for you?"

"Go instantly," she replied, "to Sir Charles Sefton; we have taken the girl under our protection, we *must* see that nothing happens to her; she shall *not* go with him! Fly! lose not a moment, they may set off to-night!"

"I think it cursed ridiculous, my dear Mrs. Davenport, and you would do much better to let them alone."

"If you do not go, by all that's dear to me, I'll go myself," said the still weeping lady.

"Oh! my dear, that would be ten times more ridiculous; I'll go:—but do you think Sir Charles will not deny her being in his house, if he wishes her to go with him?"

"Oh! he cannot wish it," said she; "it is only her, a forward creature! Put him upon his honour, he will not surely forfeit that!"

"No, no, as a gentleman, I think he will not," said Mr. Davenport, and set off, against his better judgment, to Sir Charles Sefton's.

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\* *Historique.*



That gentleman's party had just quitted him, and he instantly left his chamber, to which he had retired for the remainder of the night, to wait on Mr. Davenport in the drawing-room. Mr. Davenport entreated him to answer him as the man of honour and the gentleman, whether he knew any thing of Miss Marsham?

His ignorance, Sir Charles could safely plead; for it was near two hours since she had quitted his house! and laying\* his extended hand on his bosom, as the seat of *unblemished honour*, and casting up his eyes, he called heaven, with the most solemn asseverations, to witness that he had not seen her, neither was she in his house. "Search, my dear friend," added he, "let not a single closet be unexplored. Why, what the deuce, my good fellow, fond as I am of *variety*, do you think I am going to carry into a foreign climate a woman who would discredit the angels of our own?" "No, no, hardly," said Mr. Davenport, "only the situation she is in, you know, often softens the heart, and—" "*Bagatelle!* my dear Davenport," interrupted the Baronet, with that chilling kind of expression which shewed *that* circumstance had not in the least softened *his* heart.

"Why," resumed Davenport, "as to your little *caprice, en passant*, with the poor little unlucky devil, that *is* a mere *bagatelle*; I'm only d——d sorry it happened while she was under our charge; but that is not to the present purpose. We know, in *many* instances, my dear Sir Charles, you have proved your high sense of honour in several *rencontres*; and in the honour of a man of your rank and fashion, implicit trust may be placed! I wish you a good-night and a pleasant voyage, which I hope may fulfill all your wishes and those of your friends, for the benefit of your health." Then with a few polite *congéés*, these votaries of *modern* honour took leave of each other.

Sir Charles, on looking at his watch, found, instead of *night*, it was fast approaching the hour of four in the *morning*; he therefore called to him his favourite servant, the depository of all his secrets, and told him, that though he had not meant to quit London till after nine o'clock, he would now go at eight, and therefore should not go to bed at all. Not that he feared the calling of Margaret before the time he had treacherously allotted her; for not thinking she would be desperate enough to stay out all night, he rather thought she would never find it practicable to get out from Mr. Davenport's at so early an hour, and though Mr. Davenport had told him she could nowhere be found, he had little doubt but she would yet be there before his return to Grosvenor-square; but yet, supposing she had *not* gone home, he should be many miles on his journey before she would venture to call.

Mrs. Davenport, not quite so well satisfied as her husband, of the *honourable* principles of Sir Charles Sefton, anxiously awaited the morning visit of the Reverend Edward Marsham.

Edward wished to pay his respects that morning to his Right Honourable and Reverend Rector; but, to present himself there for a morning visit before two o'clock in the afternoon, would never do: an earlier hour must not be thought of either, for Mrs. Davenport's *levee*; and he knew his Margaret was so pliable, that she no doubt implicitly followed the steps of her patroness.

Mrs. Davenport, however, rose that morning from her restless pillow earlier than usual, so anxious was she for this visit to be over, in which she must inform a father of the wanderings of his child; and ignorant where she had betaken herself, the dreadful idea

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rushed on the mind of Mrs. Davenport, that perhaps she had, in terror at the arrival of her father, taken her final leave of the world, and entered another uncalled and unprepared. This idea was strengthened by the return of Robert, her footman, whom she had sent to various parts of the town, to discover, if possible, any tidings of her: he had heard, that a young lady, exactly answering the description of Miss Marsham, in an elegantly made, grey, corded sarsnet pelisse, and bonnet of the same, with black tassels, had been seen wandering in the park at day-break, seemingly in great distress of mind. Mrs. Davenport's good-natured disposition now made her detest the cruelty of Sir Charles Sefton, whom, she made no doubt, had driven the unhappy girl from his presence, when Mr. Davenport saw her at his door; and that she had in despair drowned herself in the canal. She knew not how to act, she was half tempted to order her carriage and drive out, to avoid the sight of her long-known and respected friend, and spare him the pangs which she must give to his parental feelings: but then he had left word the evening before, that he would call again, and Mrs. Davenport knew and practised the etiquette of politeness too correctly to be out that morning.

It was now past one, and at that hour Margaret was safely housed, and closely concealed at the mysterious lodgings in St. James's-street; but how was she surprised, when she found, as she looked up, that instead of being enfolded in the arms of her sister (for she had rushed to her embrace without regarding the object), she perceived she was clasped to the bosom of Lady Isabella Raymond! "Oh! Lady Isabella!" said the unhappy girl, "cruel disappointment!" and from bodily weakness and various contending emotions, she fainted away.

When she revived, she found herself seated on a sofa by the bewitching Isabella, who was administering restoratives to her with the tenderest concern, and weeping over her.

"Will you refuse," said she to her, "to the friend who loves you, your affection and confidence?"

"Oh! Lady Isabella," replied Margaret, "do I not see in you, disposed though I am, and ever was, to love you, yet do I not behold the destroyer of my sister's peace and happiness?"—"Are you then still possessed of the same narrow prejudices as when I first knew you? and which I once endeavoured, and hoped I had succeeded in the attempt to eradicate from a soaring mind like yours? Tell me, pray, what are *kindred* ties to those the affections of the soul approve? Are we under any obligation to those who usher us into a world which the cruelty of man renders a scene of tears and anguish! And what claim have those on our affections, which they present to us under the titles of brothers and sisters? and these, however undeserving, they would *compel* us to love, because they are their children. How often have I told you, and you once paid deference to my understanding, that all love should be free, nor bound and manacled by human ties: the same of course holds good in friendship, which is but love refined, and exalted to that purity which owns no sexual attachment. Man *talks* of love: alas! few men know what it is. Man has forsaken me! Yes, the once idolized Isabella is forsaken by all she most loves. Oh! Do not, Margaritta, add to the number, do not thou forsake me."

Margaret sank, weeping, on the bosom of this female sophist: by degrees her repugnance wore off at the idea of uniting her fate to that of the woman who had seduced

the husband of her sister, and ere two hours had past, she felt for her the warmest affection and admiration.

She consented to share with her, her home and fortune; and as concealment on each side was absolutely requisite, they were discoverable to no one, from the recluse manner in which they lived, each lady taking the name of her perfidious lover—Mrs. Frederic, and Mrs. Charles; reporting themselves to the land-lady of the house, who was not *very* particular or tenacious about her lodgers, as the wives of officers, who were abroad.

Margaret soon imbibed all the deadly poison of Lady Isabella's opinions, who succeeded in making her think that what each of them had been guilty of was no crime, and that inclinations would never have been given us, if they were not to be gratified: she taught her to glory in their present friendship, which, sacred and liberal in itself, disdained the common-place opinion of the world, or the unavoidable ties of kindred; and so much did she need the soothings of a friend herself, so much consolation did she feel in talking over her own misfortunes to Margaret, and in the good-nature and real good heart of this poor unfortunate, that Lady Isabella really felt for her all the friendship she had, in the commencement of their acquaintance, only feigned.

“We are fellow sufferers, my Margaret,” she would say, “both have suffered by the perfidy of men, who now forsake us. Sir Charles is the most inhuman villain of the two: for I am not, my poor girl, I am not in your situation; if I was, I very well know how I should act. How hard are early prejudices to root from the mind! Harrington, the *sentimental* Harrington, will not for me forswear all future commerce with his wife, if she does *condescend* to forgive him; no, he will gratefully, he says, accept her forgiveness! He will not, as I request him, devote his life to me and me alone, on the shores of the Atlantic; we therefore meet no more! Nor will I accept the least assistance from him, though his liberality would furnish me amply: but fear not, we shall not want, my dear girl; I have money sufficient for two months: and then I have a beautiful set of diamonds to dispose of, which will support us for some time. But I would trust all to chance, my only deity, sooner than be obliged to *him* for pecuniary aid, who will not make for me the trifling sacrifice I have required.”

Margaret, however, though she did not contradict her ladyship, thought the giving up so lovely a creature as her sister Mary, and a lawful wife beside, was no such *trifling* sacrifice! notwithstanding the beauty of the lady before her was so resplendent: but she now estimated more the *great mind* of her ladyship, who, generously braving the opinions of a cruel and illiberal world, had intreated and implored, when she saw Margaritta on the point of perishing, and not knowing where to betake herself, not only that she would share her lot, but promised, if any thing should happen, to deprive her of her protection, that she would recommend her to the care of a sister, who lived in affluence, but who having yielded to the soft passion for another man besides her husband (for she was married), and followed the *dictates of nature* (though she had forsaken her <sup>\*</sup> *three* children to indulge her illicit inclination), had become obliged to forego respectable society, yet Lady Isabella assured Margaret was a most *liberal-minded* woman, and would take the tenderest care of her and her child . . . Yet this *tender* lady had forsaken her own!!!

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“As to my sister, Caroline,” said Lady Isabella, “with more faults than you and I have hairs on our heads, amongst which is that love-repelling, odious vice of gaming, says, forsooth, she will never look upon me again! While her husband, who preaches a doctrine he *cannot* believe, because he *shews* his disbelief by his *daily practice*, inveighs against my conduct, which, he says, will absolutely prevent my ever filling again those circles I had once a right to move amongst! Yet, to gratify their own family pride, and keep up the respectability of our rank, they are endeavouring to accommodate matters, and prevent a trial, with its consequent divorce; for a divorce, they say, must ever prove a wife to be *guilty*! Whereas a separation only makes the wife received and pitied as a sufferer; she can tell her own story, and having an husband in many degrees unworthy, he is often looked upon as the *sole* transgressor: poor subterfuges, my Margaritta. However, the detestable Raymond can never allow me a maintenance of separation, but what must be trifling indeed; for nothing but being ordered abroad and eluding his creditors, can save him much longer from the King’s Bench; the confines of which have long groaned for him. His friends, perhaps, conscious that he endeavoured to sell me to old Lord Fenwater, and also knowing that he purposely gave me every opportunity with Harrington, may try (to prevent his being sent to Coventry by the whole army) to make up a purse for him, or rather for *me*: some of them are very wealthy. If a trial at Westminster-Hall must take place, so be it; I have been guilty of no crime, and Isabella Emerson will never live to be the public scorn, or be in any way publicly disgraced, nor an outcast from any one of those circles she has been accustomed once to honour by her presence.”

Though every word this independent spirited lady uttered served but to convince Margaret of the superiority and greatness of her mind, yet she could not help frequently remarking to herself, how much the late agitations of that mind had impaired her person: life, spirit, and vivacity no longer sparkled in her now anxious eyes; no more the arch smile embellished her lovely mouth, nor the elegant *repartée* escape it: instead of the keen and pointed satire tempered with genteel, though original wit, which used to enliven her conversation, as they now spoke to each other of their absent friends, to the recollection of some she gave a sigh,—on others she bestowed the strong expressions of anger and malevolence.

The mind of Lady Isabella was not, naturally, intended for the throne of vice: education, the prevalence of fashion, the ill examples of her nearest relations, with the books she perused from her girlish days, had warped, and almost entirely overset the few good principles inherent in her, and caused her to give way to the free indulgence of any favourite inclination: the pride and obstinacy of self-will made her continue in any opinion she once thought proper to receive, even though her heart or her mature judgment condemned it: rashness and impetuosity governed her conduct; and to shew her independence of her relatives, and her contempt of the world, she would, in the momentary impulse of haughty vexation, exercise her revenge on those who would dare to contradict or restrain her, even though she inflicted vengeance on herself. Such chiefly was her motive for her marriage with Major Raymond; and of this imprudent and hasty marriage the reader has already seen the result.

The passions of Lady Isabella were warm, her affections ardent, and her friendship, if it once took root, even if misplaced, was sincere: had she been differently educated, though her mind was by no means faultless, and though her temper was

naturally severe and mischievous, yet, if in early youth her fine sense had been taught to take a proper bent, she would, with her native energies, have been as conspicuous for her virtue, as for her contempt of that ornament to the female character, and her mind would have become as excellent as it was great.

It is a painful reflection on the bounded limits of all human worth, but there certainly are some characters, wherein the weeds of pride and passion so choke the *latent*, but yet not *extinct* virtues, that they must sink before they can rise: the commission of some crime must abash the haughty countenance, and bend down the lofty head, that towers in all the pride and insolence of mistaken *virtue*, or rather the pride of an unsullied *reputation*, (for true virtue is meek and humble). Misfortune and neglect must shew them their dependence on the kindness of their inferiors in worldly rank; and as they feel their own littleness before superior goodness, they will be sedulously emulous and ambitious of becoming good likewise.

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## CHAP. XXV.

## THE INFIDEL'S LAST RESOURCE.

Asylum sad! from reason, hope, and Heaven!

YOUNG.

IT is in vain to describe the agitation of Mrs. Davenport, when the Reverend Edward Marsham entered her *boudoir*, and the feelings of the father, when he heard from her the fatal lapse of his child from the path of virtue, and her elopement.

With anguish unspeakable, he took his leave, and after traversing the whole town, in the hope of meeting her, his intention was, if he succeeded in his search, to call the wanderer back to peace and hope by his kind forgiveness. This truly christian divine felt no emotions of unrelenting wrath against his daughter; but wished only to heal the lacerated heart of the credulous girl, who had been misled by the artifice of a villain.

After many perplexing conjectures, it struck him that it was more than probable she had accompanied her seducer on his voyage. On the honour of a wretch, who had thus, with cruel wantonness, dishonoured his daughter, he placed no reliance; though Mrs. Davenport had laid so much stress on it, and he doubted not but she was actually in the house at the very time he requested Mr. Davenport to search every corner of it; for the painful intelligence which Robert had brought from the Park, Mrs. Davenport had carefully concealed from a parent, already but too much anguished by the afflicting information which she *had* imparted.

Worn out by fatigue, sorrow, and disappointment, he returned to St. James's-square; he retired to his chamber and sent his respects to Sir Edward, and that, not finding himself very well, he hoped he would excuse his attendance at dinner.

Now alone, and freed from the busy unfeeling throng, who had passed him in the public streets, all employed, regardless of other's concerns, in the pursuit of their own individual business or pleasure, he reflected seriously on what course he had best take, and how to make known to his worthy friend this disgrace, and the additional sorrow which *now* assailed him; for, to conceal any part of his concerns from such a friend, he deemed unpardonable.

Sir Edward ordered that his dinner might be sent up to him, and which went accompanied by his kindest and most affectionate enquiries after his health: in vain the unhappy man essayed to eat; and while Sir Edward was taking his wine, he joined him in the parlour, and informed him of the fatal circumstance which had happened, without reserve.

"There remains little doubt, my worthy friend," said Sir Edward, "but that Sir Charles Sefton has taken off your daughter: I know that he sails to-morrow early, because I am intimately acquainted with a gentleman who goes in the same vessel; and it is now seven o'clock; not winged horses could reach the port now, before they will be off. I have no acquaintance with Sir Charles, further than that I formed with him at the parsonage at Eglantine, and which ceased at my departure; for he was a man I ever despised: but I will immediately write to my friend, and the letter will arrive nearly as soon on the island as

they do: he can inform me if Sir Charles has a lady with him answering your daughter's description. In the mean time, dear friend, do not sink, Providence watches over the good; to that small, select class I am sure you belong, and he will not afflict those, his *only* chosen, with more than they are able to bear. We will go down to Twickenham, for a few days, to that excellent sufferer, our dear Mary: remember, my worthy friend, it behoves you, as much as possible, to pour the balm of paternal comfort into her bleeding heart; and for this, I am sure, you will see how needful it is for you to exert all your energies: and we must patiently wait the event of hearing of your other daughter, by the next accounts from Madeira; for I have not the least doubt but that she has prevailed on Sir Charles to take her with him: she expected, daily, your arrival in town, and dreaded to encounter the anger of a virtuous parent. Make yourself easy, my excellent friend; when I certainly find she is with Sir Charles, I will compel him to do her justice." "That, sir, he can never do," replied Edward, "and wretched and infamous as is her present lot, I should be sorry to see her the *wife* of such a man!"

It was in vain for poor Edward Marsham that night to press his pillow with his aching head: alas! the *heart* ached so much more, that sleep fled his eye-lids the whole night; and it was absolutely requisite to remove him from town, had he not even owned the dear tie which called him to Twickenham.

In about three or four days, Sir Edward and Mr. Marsham came to town: as the former was now anxious to present the worthy Curate to the Chancellor, they called on him in their way home; but found, more to the disappointment of Sir Edward, than the heart-broken Mr. Marsham, that the benefice had been given away a few days before: the Chancellor, however, made most fervent promises of very soon providing for one, who was so urgently recommended by his friend, Sir Edward Harrington, and whom, on his own account, he felt sincerely desirous of serving.

Such a flattering reception from one so high in rank and power, would at one time have imparted much pleasurable hope to the mind of Edward, but now that mind was only alive to sorrow; hope could no more allure, nor the prospect of an easy competency any longer gratify, which, on account of bequeathing something to his poor Margaret, would once, had she remained virtuous, have been the summit of his earthly wishes.

He left Sir Edward in Pall-mall, where he was engaged to dine with a very particular friend, and where he much wished to persuade Edward Marsham to accompany him, for change of scene, and to dissipate his thoughts; but the Curate intreated so earnestly to be excused, that Sir Edward was obliged to acquiesce.

After he had taken a solitary dinner, a note was brought him by a servant, who left it, saying it required no answer. He saw the seal was engraved with the arms of the Leslie family; and on hastily breaking it, he read the following words:

"Sir,

I was extremely surprised to find that you left your cure, without first writing to me, to obtain my permission." [Edward here could not forbear smiling, for this was an ecclesiastical despotism he had never heard of before.] "This I would have looked over, but you might have been polite enough to have called on me, after your arrival in town, and informed me of your reasons for thus quitting your parochial duty. However, sir, I write to inform you, another Curate is appointed in your place.

I am,  
 Sir, &c.  
 THEODORE LESLIE”

“I am now,” thought Edward, “bereft of all but the scanty pittance left me by my sister: on that I cannot possibly exist. Can I bear the idea of becoming a dependant on the bounty of Sir Edward Harrington? That must never be! And my son-in-law will soon diminish his noble fortune to help to pay those exorbitant damages which Major Raymond has laid against him.”

For the town now rang with the approaching trial. Major Raymond scorned all accommodation urged for, both by the Leslie and Harrington families: the one, he resolved to humble for their former contempt of him, when he married into the family; the other, he looked upon as the golden mine, which would compensate him for that dishonour he had aided and connived at. In order that Harrington should satisfy *all* his creditors, *some* of his claim he had discharged, with the immense sums he had already borrowed from the thoughtless Frederic.

Though he had, at first, winked at the infidelity of his wife, yet her own conduct had been truly reprehensible; and Harrington’s fault was so aggravated by his recent marriage with a woman he once adored, it was expected that Major Raymond would succeed in obtaining every shilling of his damages, which he laid at *sixty thousand pounds!*

Edward sat some time in that scheming kind of various thought, which fixes upon nothing, when a faint sickness came over him; and being a beautiful night, and rather warm for the season, he walked towards the Green Park, to try the effect of the air, to ponder over his misfortunes, and await the next morning for action and exertion, which would now become requisite towards his own support.

As he knew the keeper of the gate, he rang, and asked his permission to walk round the bason: after taking two or three turns, it began to grow somewhat dark, from the moon being under a cloud, which appeared to threaten rain: he discovered during this obscurity something white, like two female figures, who appeared to move towards the grove. Whether from an irresistible impulse of curiosity, or only with a view of dissipating his wretched thoughts, he knew not, but he rose with caution, and followed with softly stealing step after them, till he drew near, and then concealed himself among the trees.

One of them addressed the other in a very low voice, as follows: “I think the Park is totally empty. Now, my friend, my comforter in affliction, give me a last embrace!” The other figure fell on her knees, and answered her; but her voice seemed hoarse and scarcely articulate, and as if she laboured under a severe cold. “Think, oh! think, my dear friend,” said she, “Oh! let us reflect, before it will be too late.”—“Cowardice and prejudice, I see,” said the other, “have so taken root in your mind, that nothing will be able to do them away. Farewell! go to that home which we left, and to which I have bade an eternal adieu! they will receive you: go to my sister Beatrice, tell her you come from me, she will assist you.”—“To all that may concern *myself*,” said the other, “you have conquered every prejudice: but shall I not commit a double murder, by destroying with myself, my unborn child?”—“Better is it,” said her companion, “to give it peace by death,



than usher it into this world of misery: oh! if it should be a daughter, you deliver it from *man*, its greatest future enemy.”—“But do not we, ourselves,” said the other, “make this world a scene of misery?” “Farewell,” said she, whose daring mind seemed most under the influence of despair, “a moment is too long to live, after the upbraidings of a friend; and if I *have* been guilty, and there *is* a future state of punishment, I hasten to receive my deserts; but my chastisement shall be inflicted by a superior being to the sons and daughters of mortality.” She then dragged herself from her friend, who still endeavoured to cling to her, crying, “No, no, living or dying, my lot shall never be separated from yours.” They then walked so quick to the fatal bason, that Edward had much ado to overtake them, and prevent the dreadful plan which he found was in agitation. He endeavoured to exalt his voice, and cry, “Hold!” but the palpitation of his heart made the word die amongst the rustling of the leaves, which were agitated by a rising wind: he plainly, however, distinguished the voice of Lady Isabella Raymond calling to her friend, “Now I set you the example,” and gave the fatal plunge before Edward had time to prevent it. He seized the other trembler in his arms, and said, “Stop, rash young woman, and I will save your friend.” He then rushed into the water, and bore her breathless to the shore: he alarmed the Park-gate-keeper, and between them, they conveyed her to the nearest public-house, where medical assistance being immediately sent for, the wretched Isabella was soon recovered.

During this scene, Edward had not once turned towards Margaret; having little idea that his daughter could be residing with, and the avowed friend of, the woman who had destroyed her sister’s peace: she had been strictly watched, in the fear that she might escape, and still commit what these desperate young women had seemed resolved upon.

Margaret had soon discovered her father in the deliverer of Lady Isabella; and dreading to encounter his looks and reproaches, she had knelt by the bed-side, with her face hid by, and resting on her arms: the physician, however, whom Edward had called in, said, “I think it is requisite to attend to this young woman; I have remarked her posture for some time, and what little I can see of her face, is pale as death.

Edward helped him to raise her: what a sight for a father to behold! a daughter in the evident situation of disgrace to her family, the avowed friend of the woman to whom his other daughter owed her conjugal misery, and ready, with her, to rush into eternity, with her unborn infant!

She sank, covered with guilt and shame, at the feet of her father; nor could that father, notwithstanding the anguish of mind he felt, which had more in it of “sorrow than of anger,” spurn her from him: ideas crowded on his soul, that villainous and sophistical arts had wrought on an imbecile mind, to tempt it to dishonour, inconsistency, and irreligion; and he resolved in spite of every worldly prejudice to call her back, by tenderness and paternal soothing. “Thou hast been faulty, Margaret,” said he, “but fear not thy father, he will forgive thee. Look up, forlorn and abandoned one, abandoned by all thou hast most loved and trusted in, and now nearly forsaken by thy God! thy lover and thy friend have taught thee vice, and what comfort have they afforded thee? Thy impoverished parent will give thee all in his power to bestow, and guide thy wandering mind to repentance and peace.”

“And is this,” thought Margaret, as she again received the parental embrace, “is this the father I once thought so rigid? O life, life! how do thy real events condemn the

fictional joys and sorrows of romance, and shew the folly of such idle and improbable adventures!"

How different, also, felt the Lady Isabella, as she lay on an humble bed, restored to life, and snatched from eternity! how did she prove the truth of the poet, who says,

"Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,  
Who stand upon the threshold of the new."

She, who was resolved no longer to live, when public infamy had branded her name, when she could no longer shine honoured, the gayest of the gay, now felt happy again to "breathe the vital air, and triumph in *existence*" only.—"If the true Christian is deluded," thought she, "oh! how happy is such sweet, such powerful delusion! hope ever dwells in his bosom, amidst all his severest misfortunes. My brother, whose life is a reproach to his doctrine, will see me no more! a world of continual crime condemns me, and shuts me out: he, whose sacred character forbids him to associate with guilt, to whose eyes the very sight of my form must be repugnant, saves my life, at the hazard of his own. "Mr. Marsham," said she, "how can you bear my odious presence? I beg you will leave me; I cannot meet your reproachful eye."—"Have I then reproached you, Lady Isabella," replied Edward, "even with my looks?"—"No, sir, but they strike me with awe: methinks, you should have rejoiced to see me perish."

"Pardon me, madam, it is the duty of every man to step forward to rescue a fellow-creature from destruction: to me, peculiarly belongs the exertion of *saving* souls, not the wish that they may *perish*. Every *worldly* prejudice must therefore be now done away: as Lady Isabella Raymond can no longer shine with dignity, amongst the great and gay, be it my part to soothe her mind with devotion's fairest hopes, and her own in retirement to pass her days in quiet and virtue: for retirement, to a lady of your cultivated mind, will not bring with it that dreary gloom which you may now imagine. At present, be calm; at some future period, we will speak more of those subjects, to which you have hitherto, I fear, given but a very little portion of thought except to despise. I am happy to find you so perfectly recovered: I have just ordered a coach, and when you find yourself able to rise, I will accompany you back to your lodgings; but you must pardon me, and I am sure your good sense will see the propriety of my resolution, that I cannot think of my child being any longer an inmate in the same dwelling with you; honour, decorum, the ties of sisterhood equally forbid it; and you both part this night, to meet no more while I live, to have any influence or authority over my daughter. You weep, Margaret; and I rejoice to see that Lady Isabella weeps also, these tears are salutary and will relieve you; and, trust me," added the good man, with much mildness, "I will do all in my power to befriend you: assistance, alas! poor as I am, I cannot offer you; but I can *ensure* it you from a quarter whence you might least expect, and least merit it." "What!" said the still proud Isabella, "do you imagine I would consent to receive assistance from her I have so deeply injured? No, nor from any one, sir, who is even in the smallest degree allied to her; I would sooner toil for hard-earned existence, in the very lowest occupation: but it is needless. I have jewels of considerable value in the hands of my banker, which, whenever I should die, I bequeathed to my sister, Beatrice, whom you know not, and\* the world

have disclaimed her. Those jewels I shall convert into money; they will support me for some time in that retirement, where I may choose hereafter to end my days: and if my friends succeed in making my unfeeling and sordid husband allow me, out of the damages he gains, the half only of the sum he received as my fortune after our marriage, I shall then have no farther pecuniary wants. I feel myself now, sir, able to rise, and I will accompany you from hence.”

The day began to break, as Mr. Marsham led the unhappy Isabella Raymond to the hackney-coach which stood in waiting: much did he say to her, during her ride to her former lodgings in St. James’s-street; deeply did he impress her mind with her sole dependence on a superior power: the haughty, high-born, the once flattered and caressed Lady Isabella Raymond now sank humbled before a poor country Curate, whose dictates she would once, not only have despised, but looked upon, had they been directed to her with that superiority which virtue now gave him, the height of insolence. She ventured however to remark, and that very judiciously, as she agreed with Mr. Marsham that he could not take his daughter, in her situation, to Sir Edward Harrington’s, that it would not be possible to fix her in any temporary lodging, that was reputable, till a later hour in the day; and with so much sad and forlorn meekness, with so much polished and native sweetness, did she urge her request, that Edward and his daughter not only stayed and partook of her breakfast, but he sat near two hours after with her, enforcing his pious and gentle precepts, and advising the plan of life he wished her in future to adopt. He had long studied the human heart, he had often witnessed the real contrition of the sincere penitent, as he has attended the bed of sickness and death; and he feared not now to trust Lady Isabella with the worst of all her enemies—herself! He meant, after he had seen her re-established in her lodgings, to take Margaret to an hotel for that day; but he found it impossible to resist her persuasions, especially in her disconsolate and wretched situation.

The parting between her and Margaret was affecting, even to agony: they saw each other for the last time, and the worthy Edward chid not their frequent procrastination; he even tenderly took the hand of the deeply abashed Isabella, and said, as his eyes were moistened with the tear of pity, “Persevere! think how many years are yet before you. Remember always the mercy of Omnipotence, and you will, I am sure, you will be happy.” Lady Isabella dropped on her knees, and gratefully bedewed the hand, which she fervently grasped, with her tears. They then all solemnly repeated the word, farewell, and Edward and his daughter departed.

They drove a short distance from London, and the father took an humble lodging for his daughter, where he left her, promising to see her (as indeed he promised the same to her wretched friend, who stood so much in need of consolation and advice) the next day.

He then returned to St. James’s-square.

“I was much surprised and alarmed,” said Sir Edward, after the usual salutations, “that you did not sleep here last night. Did you return to Twickenham?” “My best of friends,” replied he, “I have such wonderful events to relate to you, that you will no longer be surprised at my absence, when I unfold them.”

“I shall be most happy to hear you,” said the Baronet, with a degree of cold severity, “for *I* have both *heard* and *seen* what has much astonished me.”

Edward then gave a full detail of all the reader has been informed of in the commencement of this chapter. "Excellent, best of men!" said Sir Edward, as he cordially took his hand, "how much do I glory in taking to my heart the true christian, who sets aside all personal animosity, and discovers, with the benevolent eye of charity, latent virtues, under appearances the most vicious, and seemingly lost amongst actions the most reprehensible; while he saves the sinner who injures him, with equal joy and delight, as he would the dearest of his earthly friends. Yet, such a character as thine stands as a more certain mark for the arrows of slander: would you believe that calumny has most severely handled you this morning? Mr. Leslie was returning from a masquerade, as you handed into an hackney-coach, from a little obscure public-house, his sister-in-law, Lady Isabella! He huddled his domino round him, for the revered gentleman, by what chance I know not, was on foot, and traced the coach, till he saw it stop at an house in St. James's-street: he marked well the house, and then repaired to the St. James's Coffee-house, where bereaving himself of his domino, he sat and watched this house, to which he was nearly opposite.

"I walked in there early, from taking a walk round the Park; I had not met Mr. Leslie since the affair of my nephew with Lady Isabella, and I was desirous of quitting the coffee-room, as an interview, I judged, would not be very pleasant to either party; but Mr. Leslie rose and intreated a few minutes conversation with me, at the window in which he was posted: he related to me what he had seen; I told him it was impossible: "Do you think," said he, "I do not know Lady Caroline's sister?"—"Assuredly, sir, any one who had often seen Lady Isabella, could not easily be mistaken in *her* person, in Mr. Marsham's *you* might."—"What! in my late Curate?" said the noble Rector of Eglantine. "Yes, sir, your *late* Curate," said I. Leslie dropt his bold eyes;—however, to make short my story, to satisfy his repeated request, I stood and gazed with him at the window, and, to my great surprise, saw you hand a female into a hackney-coach; she was so enveloped in a shawl, and her face so concealed in a huge bonnet, that no one could distinguish her form or features: but we had little doubt but it was Lady Isabella. I was much mortified, took my leave, and came away; for it was nearly two hours after my arrival at the coffee-house, before you took *your* leave: and I must say, that I thought within myself, whatever may be Edward Marsham's motives, he surely carries Christian charity too far, to be thus mysteriously in company with the woman who has, by an adulterous commerce with his daughter's husband, made that daughter miserable. But this was not all I was fated to endure this morning.

"I called in at a fruit-shop, to pay for some fruit I had purchased a few days ago, and there stood a gossiping awkward-looking girl of a servant maid, twirling the key of a street-door round her finger. "Why, yes," said she to the shop-woman, (while I was speaking to the master,) "I *thinks*, indeed, they be but queer ones! they brought home a gentleman at day-break this morning; and there's been such crying and kissing one another's hands with *he* and the tall handsome *un*, as nothing can be like; and he does seem so to love her, and look so *pitiful* at her."—"Ay!" said the shop-woman, "they went off, I fancy, together in a hack: he took some lady, but she so *muddled* herself up, that nobody should know her, I suppose."—"Sure! well, like enough," said the wench, "I *hasn't* been at home some time, and I dare say I shall get a fine noise; for I've been giving it our butcher's boy! he *axed* me which of the ladies that gentleman in black was a-going

to take into keeping? I'd no notion of *his inperance*; 't isn't, you know, ma'am, like you, who *has* a right to *axe* about their neighbours." She then began a long gossip's tale, in which I found you and your ladies no more concerned, and I went home: but recollecting that I had appointed my banker to meet me at his house at a certain hour, I went there; and as I came back, met with an old friend, and whom nothing would serve, but we must lounge away an hour at the Panorama, in the Strand. I accompanied him, *malgré moi*, in *his* carriage.

"When I arrived at the Panorama, I met with several acquaintance, who all seemed to regard me with a queer pity, like that of Mrs. Candour in the School for Scandal: presently I got behind a knot of genteel-looking people, but of whom I knew nothing, and I am sure they did not *personally* know me, by what they said. "Well!" said a lady of a certain age, "What will the depravity of these times come to?"—"Oh!" said an affected puppy, on her right hand, "*C'est tout bien commode!* the poor parson wanted to marry his pretty daughter well, at any rate, and on *easy* terms: and so, it is thought, between them all they agreed to let the handsome and dashing Mr. Harrington, who could never keep to one *woman* for one *month*, enjoy himself with every yielding fair-one, that might chance to please him: so, I think the least they can do, after giving him so much latitude, is to take notice of her that has made him so happy!"—"I maintain," said the lady who had first spoken, "that it is the height of depravity, for \* young Mrs. Harrington and her father, and Lady Isabella Raymond, to be all living together: it seems the father has just taken her down to his daughter's this very morning."—"The person I pity most," said a young lady, "is Sir Edward Harrington: they say, he has lavished immense sums upon the education of Mrs. Harrington, who, I believe, before her marriage, could hardly read or write: and now, you see, they are all revelling and living together upon the good Baronet, for I am told, he entirely supports Mrs. Harrington and her father; and I dare say, he does not know that the shameless Lady Isabella is among them."

"I could not help smiling, as I looked on my friend; but I observed that he kept a petrifying kind of gravity, nor did he return my smile; and, vexed at what I had heard, and also at what I had seen in the morning, I moved to come home. As we came through Pall-Mall, for curiosity's sake, I said we would step into the Historic Gallery; I there heard a general buz of — "Is not it very strange that they should be all living together?" while a pert Miss amongst them, said, "I am sure, when I am a wife, my husband will not find *me* so very accommodating!"

"Disgusted at what I had heard, I took leave of my friend: but he said, "My dear Sir Edward, I can tell you the meaning of all this: it was all through the coffee-room of the St. James's, this morning, that Mr. Harrington, his wife, and Lady Isabella are all living together *en famille*, as comfortably as can be, and have for some time; that the father knows it, and not only has winked at it, but approves, and *frequently* comes up to town with her ladyship to transact her business, and meets her at a little public-house, in the vicinity of Piccadilly, or at private lodgings in St. James's Street: I would not tell you, did I not know it to be a fact, for my intelligence came from the Reverend Mr. Leslie himself."—"Depend upon it," said I, "much has been added to it, both by him and those

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\* Remarks on a recent *affaire historique verbatim*.

\* *Historique*.

who carried the tale to you.”—We then parted, and when I came home, I found it was past four o’clock, and that you had not yet returned: this vexed me, I own:—We will dine now, and after dinner I have more to say to you.”

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## CHAP. XXVI.

## CONCLUSION.

“The banished are not unfortunate, so long as they are not prevented from taking their virtue with them into banishment. Wise Providence! thy loveliest possessions are independent of human power.”

## GENERAL MOREAU'S MSS.

AS this work has already exceeded its intended limits, we inform the reader, as briefly as we can, that the dinner, to which Sir Edward Harrington was so particularly engaged, the day he returned with Mr. Marsham from Twickenham, and to which he so much wished the Curate to accompany him, was, to meet his penitent nephew; for so his friend had contrived for it, unknown to Sir Edward. We will pass over Frederic's unfeigned contrition, and his reconciliation with his uncle: again Sir Edward promised to restore him to his favour, and to employ all his powers, to gain him the pardon of his affectionate and excellent wife.

Retirement the most secluded, was now become absolutely requisite for most of the conspicuous actors in this piece. Sir Edward had an estate in Wales: and as his imprudent and thoughtless nephew, notwithstanding his own riches, had greatly impaired his uncle's large fortune, it was judged expedient that he, the good Curate and his daughter, with her contrite and deeply humbled Frederic, should occupy the retired mansion in Wales; Edward Marsham as resident chaplain to the Baronet, who would also put him in possession of a small Welch living, then vacant and in his own gift, but which he had never thought sufficiently good to present him with, having higher views for him.

The poor romantic wanderer, Margaret, was still to retain the name she had adopted, and to pass for a young widow; for, as Sir Edward remarked, a little deception which does no harm, must sometimes be practised in a deceptive world, to enable us to pass through it, when we have erred, not only for our own credit, but chiefly for that of our families and connexions.

This good man carried his generosity so far, as even to propose that Margaret might make a part of his family, at his mansion in Wales; but this her father would by no means admit; and it was agreed that a comfortable lodging should be provided for her near them, with some respectable matron, with whom she might board. When all these plans were laid, and ready to be put in execution, Charles Marsham arrived from Walcheren.

Prosperous in his situation, honoured by all his superior officers, and beloved by those beneath him, he had obtained, through the interest of those in power, who were well disposed to serve him, and to whom his merits were long unknown, the most rapid promotion; and had an appointment of still higher trust, honour, and profit bestowed upon him, but which, however, would compel him again to quit his country, and that in a very few days.

When this became known to his excellent brother and worthy benefactor, they judged it best not to pain his susceptible heart, nor irritate his over-warm temper, by a detail of many afflicting circumstances. Margaret was, therefore, reported to be on a visit to a lady in the country. The infidelity of Harrington to his amiable and favourite niece, they could not conceal from him; the public-papers had too much dwelt on the painful circumstance: men are too apt to excuse each other, in their promiscuous gallantry; of Harrington's fault he said but little, but perhaps it was owing to the presence of his uncle.

Many, however, were the bitter epithets, which he bestowed on Lady Isabella; and boasted his prophetic powers, saying, he always knew her daring spirit would never come to any good.

Edward, who now felt for her only those emotions excited by pity, said, he made no doubt but she deeply repented her crime; that she had retired from the world, and was truly afflicted at her past conduct.

Charles made no other reply than "the d——I help her; God forgive her, but I'll be shot if I ever shall." He gave fresh tears to the memory of poor Ralph; of whose fatal accident he had been previously informed by letters: and then asked, "What sort of being is his son?—who has come so unlooked and unwished for!" "Such an one," replied Edward, "whom every body must love,"—"Ay!" said Charles, "with your grave countenance, and often frowning brow, you would have said the same of a poor *donkey*; for I believe, Ned, you are disposed to love every thing that has life!"—"But," said Sir Edward, on whose judgment Charles implicitly relied, "Mr. Matthew Marsham is the most amiable of human beings." Charles said no more, but hastened to Twickenham, to his dear and favourite niece, whom he ever thought the *most amiable among women*. She now, though a soft sorrow was seated on her countenance, which, though much dispelled by the return of her Frederic's affection, yet remained visible, appeared more lovely than ever: elegance had succeeded to the untaught and uncultivated graces she had received from nature; and before her uncle Charles departed, she astonished him with her progress in the accomplishments she had been taught.

Charles stayed but three days, before he again received his orders to go abroad; and the remainder of Mr. Marsham's family, accompanied by Sir Edward and his penitent nephew, soon after set off for Wales.

It will not be displeasing, we think, to the reader to learn, that Mrs. Susanna Bradbury, able to leave her niece a fortune of *seven* thousand pounds, readily, and with the *more* ready consent of the other parties, gave up the *ten*, to unite her to her worthy lover: they still reside at Eglantine; Matthew having purchased Mrs. Harrington's cottage, where they dwell a pattern of conjugal felicity.

While recording a wedding, we must not forget to mention that of the *Royal Phelim O'Gurphy!* who soon followed his master to town; was united by him to Jenny O'Dunnahough; and this doughty descendant of Hibernia's ancient Kings has taken a little shop in Petty-France, Westminster: Jenny still sells milk, and Phelim vegetables, pickled salmon, and oysters.

Sir Charles Sefton fell a victim to his vices and dissipation, almost as soon as he reached the Island of Madeira: he expressed some regret at his usage of Margaret; and owned, that never having met before with a truly innocent female, he loved her better than any other woman. He bequeathed her one thousand pounds, and two for his child.



Margaret wept at the death of its father, and prayed heaven to forgive him, as readily as she did.

\*The Honorable and Reverend Theodore Leslie, receiving that rapid church preferment, which places him in a very conspicuous situation, affects in his outward demeanour a thorough reformation; and we are happy to say, that we believe this affectation of goodness will render it in time as real as it is habitual.

\*The love of gaming is the vice of all others, which takes deepest root, and is the most difficult to eradicate:—Lady Caroline Leslie yet devotes the greatest part of her time to the card-table.

Mrs. Kennedy is her decided favourite, and still prospers as an authoress: she still flatters the great, and her own taste and genius ensure her success, while she administers the charming well-tempered draught of adulation.

Lady Isabella Raymond retired, as soon as she could possibly arrange her pecuniary affairs to her satisfaction, to a small rural cottage, plain and humble, in the remotest part of Devonshire; and here she met the amiable woman, whom her towering virtue (which owed itself all to concurring circumstances) once despised, or noticed only in private, Mrs. Edmonds; who, with her benefactor, Mr. Rouveau, had left Eglantine, not finding the inhabitants quite congenial to their taste; the house also where they resided, being infested by damps which injured their health.

She found these amiable people true comforters in her affliction; ready to afford her every kindness and assistance in their power: in depression of spirits their cheerfulness enlivened her; in sickness their attentions soothed and restored her. She regularly corresponds with the Reverend Edward Marsham, who is delighted with the pious style of her letters, and encourages her in the glorious work of reformation: he teaches her comforted mind to receive the bright blessings of Hope! Her health daily and rapidly decays; the world has few charms for her; and though with her books, and her newly-acquired friends, she passes her time more satisfactory than she at first imagined she could do in seclusion, yet she looks anxiously forward to that period, when she shall receive the unalloyed happiness promised to the truly penitent.

Mr. and Mrs. Davenport still continue the slaves of unmeaning fashion, their lives prejudicial to themselves, and useless and uninteresting to others.

Frederic and Mary seem likely, in their retirement, to experience a far greater degree of happiness than before his error: he now never languishes for change or emancipation; but thinks himself only unhappy when bereft of the company of his beloved wife, from whom he never experiences the slightest reproach, but who shews him the sweetest and kindest attention, possesses thereby his fondest regard, while they enjoy

“An elegant sufficiency, content,

“Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,

“— — — — — useful life,

“Progressive virtue, and approving Heav’n!”

FINIS.

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